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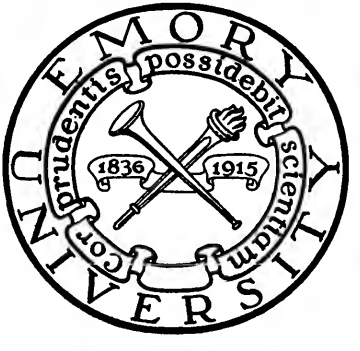

ENDYMION

VOL. II.

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ENDYMION

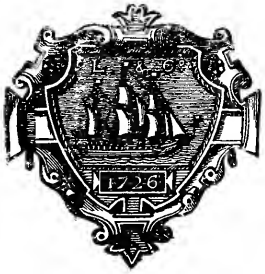
BY THE AUTHOR OF

"LOTHAIR"

"Quicquid agunt homines"

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. II.



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ENDYMION.

CHAPTER I.

With the assembling of parliament in November recommenced the sittings of the Union Society, of which Endymion had for some time been a member, and of whose meetings he was a constant and critical, though silent, attendant. There was a debate one night on the government of dependencies, which, although all reference to existing political circumstances was rigidly prohibited, no doubt had its origin in the critical state of one of our most important colonies, then much embarrassing the metropolis. The subject was one which Endymion had considered, and on which he had arrived at certain conclusions. The meeting was fully attended,

and the debate had been conducted with a gravity becoming the theme. Endymion was sitting on a back bench, and with no companion near him with whom he was acquainted, when he rose and solicited the attention of the president. Another and a well-known speaker had also risen, and been called, but there was a cry of 'new member,' a courteous cry, borrowed from the House of Commons, and Endymion for the first time heard his own voice in public. He has since admitted, though he has been through many trying scenes, that it was the most nervous moment of his life. 'After Calais,' as a wise wit said, 'nothing surprises;' and the first time a man speaks in public, even if only at a debating society, is also the unequalled incident in its way. The indulgence of the audience supported him while the mist cleared from his vision, and his palpitating heart subsided into comparative tranquillity. After a few pardonable incoherencies, he was launched into his subject, and spoke with the thoughtful fluency which knowledge alone can sustain. For knowledge is the foundation of eloquence.

'What a good-looking young fellow!' whispered Mr. Bertie Tremaine to his brother Mr. Tremaine Bertie. The Bertie Tremaines were the two greatest swells of the Union, and had a party of their own. 'And he speaks well.'

'Who is he?' inquired Mr. Tremaine Bertie of their other neighbour.

'He is a clerk in the Treasury, I believe, or something of that sort,' was the reply.

'I never saw such a good-looking young fellow,' said Mr. Bertie Tremaine. 'He is worth getting hold of. I shall ask to be introduced to him when we break up.'

Accordingly, Mr. Bertie Tremaine, who was always playing at politics, and who, being two-and-twenty, was discontented he was not Chancellor of the Exchequer like Mr. Pitt, whispered to a gentleman who sate behind him, and was, in short, the whip of his section, and signified, as a minister of state would, that an introduction to Mr. Ferrars should be arranged.

So when the meeting broke up, of which Mr. Ferrars' maiden speech was quite the

event, and while he was contemplating, not without some fair self-complacency, walking home with Trenchard, Endymion found himself encompassed by a group of bowing forms and smiling countenances, and, almost before he was aware of it, had made the acquaintance of the great Mr. Bertie Tremaine, and received not only the congratulations of that gentleman, but an invitation to dine with him on the morrow; 'quite *sans façon*.'

Mr. Bertie Tremaine, who had early succeeded to the family estate, lived in Grosvenor Street, and in becoming style. His house was furnished with luxury and some taste. The host received his guests in a library, well stored with political history and political science, and adorned with the busts of celebrated statesmen and of profound political sages. Bentham was the philosopher then affected by young gentlemen of ambition, and who wished to have credit for profundity and hard heads. Mr. Bertie Tremaine had been the proprietor of a close borough, which for several generations had returned his family to parliament, the faithful supporters of Pitt, and Perceval, and Liverpool, and he had contem-

plated following the same line, though with larger and higher objects than his ancestors. Being a man of considerable and versatile ability, and of ample fortune, with the hereditary opportunity which he possessed, he had a right to aspire, and, as his vanity more than equalled his talents, his estimate of his own career was not mean. Unfortunately, before he left Harrow, he was deprived of his borough, and this catastrophe eventually occasioned a considerable change in the views and conduct of Mr. Bertie Tremaine. In the confusion of parties and political thought which followed the Reform Act of Lord Grey, an attempt to govern the country by the assertion of abstract principles, and which it was now beginning to be the fashion to call Liberalism, seemed the only opening to public life ; and Mr. Bertie Tremaine, who piqued himself on recognising the spirit of the age, adopted Liberal opinions with that youthful fervour which is sometimes called enthusiasm, but which is a heat of imagination subsequently discovered to be inconsistent with the experience of actual life. At Cambridge Mr. Bertie Tremaine was at

first the solitary pupil of Bentham, whose principles he was prepared to carry to their extreme consequences, but being a man of energy and in possession of a good estate, he soon found followers, for the sympathies of youth are quick, and, even with an original bias, it is essentially mimetic. When Mr. Bertie Tremaine left the university he found in the miscellaneous elements of the London Union many of his former companions of school and college, and from them, and the new world to which he was introduced, it delighted him to form parties and construct imaginary cabinets. His brother Augustus, who was his junior only by a year, and was destined to be a diplomatist, was an efficient assistant in these enterprises, and was one of the guests who greeted Endymion when he arrived next day in Grosvenor Street according to his engagement. The other three were Hortensius, the whip of the party, and Mr. Trenchard.

The dinner was refined, for Mr. Bertie Tremaine combined the Sybarite with the Utilitarian sage, and it secretly delighted him

to astonish or embarrass an austere brother republican by the splendour of his family plate or the polished appointments of his household. To-day the individual to be influenced was Endymion, and the host, acting up to his ideal of a first minister, addressed questions to his companions on the subjects which were peculiarly their own, and, after eliciting their remarks, continued or completed the treatment of the theme with adequate ability, though in a manner authoritative, and, as Endymion thought, a little pompous. What amused him most in this assemblage of youth was their earnest affectation of public life. The freedom of their comments on others was only equalled by their confidence in themselves. Endymion, who only spoke when he was appealed to, had casually remarked in answer to one of the observations which his host with elaborate politeness occasionally addressed to him, that he thought it was unpatriotic to take a certain course. Mr. Bertie Tremaine immediately drew up, and said, with a deep smile, 'that he comprehended philanthropy, but patriot-

ism he confessed he did not understand ;' and thereupon delivered himself of an address on the subject which might have been made in the Union, and which communicated to the astonished Endymion that patriotism was a false idea, and entirely repugnant to the principles of the new philosophy. As all present were more or less impregnated with these tenets, there was no controversy on the matter. Endymion remained discreetly silent, and Augustus—Mr. Bertie Tremaine's brother—who sate next to him, and whose manners were as sympathising as his brother's were autocratic, whispered in a wheedling tone that it was quite true, and that the idea of patriotism was entirely relinquished except by a few old-fashioned folks who clung to superstitious phrases. Hortensius, who seemed to be the only one of the company who presumed to meet Mr. Bertie Tremaine in conversation on equal terms, and who had already astonished Endymion by what that inexperienced youth deemed the extreme laxity of his views, both social and political, evinced, more than once, a disposition to

deviate into the lighter topics of feminine character, and even the fortunes of the hazard-table; but the host looked severe, and was evidently resolved that the conversation to-day should resemble the expression of his countenance. After dinner they returned to the library, and most of them smoked, but Mr. Bertie Tremaine, inviting Endymion to seat himself by his side on a sofa at the farther end of the room, observed, 'I suppose you are looking to parliament?'

'Well, I do not know,' said the somewhat startled Endymion; 'I have not thought much about it, and I have not yet reached a parliamentary age.'

'A man cannot enter parliament too soon,' said Mr. Bertie Tremaine; 'I hope to enter this session. There will be a certain vacancy on a petition, and I have arranged to have the seat.'

'Indeed!' said Endymion. 'My father was in parliament, and so was my grandfather, but I confess I do not very well see my way there.'

'You must connect yourself with a party,'

said Mr. Bertie Tremaine, 'and you will soon enter; and being young, you should connect yourself with the party of the future. The country is wearied with the present men, who have no philosophical foundation, and are therefore perpetually puzzled and inconsistent, and the country will not stand the old men, as it is resolved against retrogression. The party of the future and of the speedy future has its head-quarters under this roof, and I should like to see you belong to it.'

'You are too kind,' murmured Endymion.

'Yes, I see in you the qualities adapted to public life, and which may be turned to great account. I must get you into parliament as soon as you are eligible,' continued Mr. Bertie Tremaine in a musing tone. 'This death of the King was very inopportune. If he had reigned a couple of years more, I saw my way to half a dozen seats, and I could have arranged with Lord Durham.'

'That was unfortunate,' said Endymion.

'What do you think of Hortensius?' inquired Mr. Bertie Tremaine.

'I think him the most brilliant speaker I

know,' said Endymion. 'I never met him in private society before; he talks well.'

'He wants conduct,' said Mr. Bertie Tremaine. 'He ought to be my Lord Chancellor, but there is a tone of levity about him which is unfortunate. Men destined to the highest places should beware of badinage.'

'I believe it is a dangerous weapon.'

'All lawyers are loose in their youth, but an insular country subject to fogs, and with a powerful middle class, requires grave statesmen. I attribute a great deal of the nonsense called Conservative Reaction to Peel's solemnity. The proper minister for England at this moment would be Pitt. Extreme youth gives hope to a country; coupled with ceremonious manners, hope soon assumes the form of confidence.'

'Ah!' murmured Endymion.

'I had half a mind to ask Jawett to dinner to-day. His powers are unquestionable, but he is not a practical man. For instance, I think myself our colonial empire is a mistake, and that we should disembarrass ourselves of its burthen as rapidly as is consistent with

the dignity of the nation; but were Jawett in the House of Commons to-morrow, nothing would satisfy him but a resolution for the total and immediate abolition of the empire, with a preamble denouncing the folly of our fathers in creating it. Jawett never spares anyone's self-love.'

'I know him very well,' said Endymion; 'he is in my office. He is very uncompromising.'

'Yes,' said Mr. Bertie Tremaine musingly; 'if I had to form a government, I could hardly offer him the cabinet.' Then speaking more rapidly, he added, 'The man you should attach yourself to is my brother Augustus—Mr. Tremaine Bertie. There is no man who understands foreign politics like Augustus, and he is a thorough man of the world.'

CHAPTER II.

When parliament re-assembled in February, the Neuchatels quitted Hainault for their London residence in Portland Place. Mrs. Neuchatel was sadly troubled at leaving her country home, which, notwithstanding its distressing splendour, had still some forms of compensatory innocence in its flowers and sylvan glades. Adriana sighed when she called to mind the manifold and mortifying snares and pitfalls that awaited her, and had even framed a highly practical and sensible scheme which would permit her parents to settle in town and allow Myra and herself to remain permanently in the country; but Myra brushed away the project like a fly, and Adriana yielding, embraced her with tearful eyes.

The Neuchatel mansion in Portland Place

was one of the noblest in that comely quarter of the town, and replete with every charm and convenience that wealth and taste could provide. Myra, who, like her brother, had a tenacious memory, was interested in recalling as fully and as accurately as possible her previous experience of London life. She was then indeed only a child, but a child who was often admitted to brilliant circles, and had enjoyed opportunities of social observation which the very youthful seldom possess. Her retrospection was not as profitable as she could have desired, and she was astonished, after a severe analysis of the past, to find how entirely at that early age she appeared to have been engrossed with herself and with Endymion. Hill Street and Wimbledon, and all their various life, figured as shadowy scenes ; she could realise nothing very definite for her present guidance ; the past seemed a phantom of fine dresses, and bright equipages, and endless indulgence. All that had happened after their fall was distinct and full of meaning. It would seem that adversity had taught Myra to feel and think.

Forty years ago the great financiers had not that commanding, not to say predominant, position in society which they possess at present, but the Neuchatels were an exception to this general condition. They were a family which not only had the art of accumulating wealth, but of expending it with taste and generosity—an extremely rare combination. Their great riches, their political influence, their high integrity and their social accomplishments, combined to render their house not only splendid, but interesting and agreeable, and gave them a great hold upon the world. At first the fine ladies of their political party called on them as a homage of condescending gratitude for the public support which the Neuchatel family gave to their sons and husbands, but they soon discovered that this amiable descent from their Olympian heights on their part did not amount exactly to the sacrifice or service which they had contemplated. They found their hosts as refined as themselves, and much more magnificent, and in a very short time it was not merely the wives of ambassadors and ministers

of state that were found at the garden fêtes of Hainault, or the balls, and banquets, and concerts of Portland Place, but the fitful and capricious realm of fashion surrendered like a fair country conquered as it were by surprise. To visit the Neuchatels became the mode; all solicited to be their guests, and some solicited in vain.

Although it was only February, the world began to move, and some of the ministers' wives who were socially strong enough to venture on such a step, received their friends. Mr. Neuchatel particularly liked this form of society. 'I cannot manage balls,' he used to say, 'but I like a ministerial reception. There is some chance of sensible conversation and doing a little business. I like talking with ambassadors after dinner. Besides, in this country you meet the leaders of the opposition, because, as they are not invited by the minister, but by his wife, anybody can come without committing himself.'

Myra, faithful to her original resolution, not to enter society while she was in mourning, declined all the solicitations of her friends

to accompany them to these assemblies. Mrs. Neuchatel always wished Myra should be her substitute, and it was only at Myra's instance that Adriana accompanied her parents. In the meantime, Myra saw much of Endymion. He was always a welcome guest by the family, and could call upon his sister at all the odds and ends of time that were at his command, and chat with her at pleasant ease in her pretty room. Sometimes they walked out together, and sometimes they went together to see some exhibition that everybody went to see. Adriana became almost as intimate with Endymion as his sister, and altogether the Neuchatel family became by degrees to him as a kind of home. Talking with Endymion, Myra heard a good deal of Colonel Albert, for he was her brother's hero—but she rarely saw that gentleman. She was aware from her brother, and from some occasional words of Mr. Neuchatel, that the great banker still saw Colonel Albert and not unfrequently, but the change of residence from Hainault to London made a difference in their mode of communication. Business was transacted in Bishopsgate

Street, and no longer combined with a pleasant ride to an Essex forest. More than once Colonel Albert had dined in Portland Place, but at irregular and miscellaneous parties. Myra observed that he was never asked to meet the grand personages who attended the celebrated banquets of Mr. Neuchatel. And why not ? His manners were distinguished, and his whole bearing that of one accustomed to consideration. The irrepressible curiosity of woman impelled her once to feel her way on the subject with Mr. Neuchatel, but with the utmost dexterity and delicacy.

'No,' said Mr. Neuchatel with a laughing eye, and who saw through everybody's purpose, though his own manner was one of simplicity amounting almost to innocence, 'I did not say Colonel Albert was going to dine here on Wednesday; I have asked him to dine here on Sunday. On Wednesday I am going to have the premier and some of his colleagues. I must insist upon Miss Ferrars dining at table. You will meet Lord Roehampton; all the ladies admire him and he admires all the ladies. It will not do to ask Colonel Albert

to meet such a party, though perhaps,' added Mr. Neuchatel with a merry smile, 'some day they may be asked to meet Colonel Albert. Who knows, Miss Ferrars? The wheel of Fortune turns round very strangely.'

'And who then is Colonel Albert? asked Myra with decision.

'Colonel Albert is Colonel Albert, and nobody else so far as I know,' replied Mr. Neuchatel; 'he has brought a letter of credit on my house in that name, and I am happy to honour his drafts to the amount in question, and as he is a foreigner, I think it is but kind and courteous occasionally to ask him to dinner.'

Miss Ferrars did not pursue the inquiry, for she was sufficiently acquainted with Mr. Neuchatel to feel that he did not intend to gratify her curiosity.

The banquet of the Neuchatels to the premier, and some of the principal ambassadors and their wives, and to those of the premier's colleagues who were fashionable enough to be asked, and to some of the dukes and duchesses and other ethereal beings who supported the

ministry, was the first event of the season. The table blazed with rare flowers and rarer porcelain and precious candelabra of sculptured beauty glittering with light; the gold plate was less remarkable than the delicate ware that had been alike moulded and adorned for a Du Barri or a Marie Antoinette, and which now found a permanent and peaceful home in the proverbial land of purity and order; and amid the stars and ribbons, not the least remarkable feature of the whole was Mr. Neuchatel himself, seated at the centre of his table, alike free from ostentation or over-deference, talking to the great ladies on each side of him as if he had nothing to do in life but whisper in gentle ears, and partaking of his own dainties as if he were eating bread and cheese at a country inn.

Perhaps Mrs. Neuchatel might have afforded a companion picture. Partly in deference to their host, and partly because this evening the first dance of the season was to be given, the great ladies in general wore their diamonds, and Myra was amused as she watched their dazzling tiaras and flashing rivières, while

not a single ornament adorned the graceful presence of their hostess, who was more content to be brilliant only by her conversation. As Mr. Neuchatel had only a few days before presented his wife with another diamond necklace, he might be excused were he slightly annoyed. Nothing of the sort; he only shrugged his shoulders, and said to his nephew, 'Your aunt must feel that I give her diamonds from love and not from vanity, as she never lets me have the pleasure of seeing them.' The sole ornament of Adriana was an orchid, which had arrived that morning from Hainault, and she had presented its fellow to Myra.

There was one lady who much attracted the attention of Myra, interested in all she observed. This lady was evidently a person of importance, for she sate between an ambassador and a knight of the garter, and they vied in homage to her. They watched her every word, and seemed delighted with all she said. Without being strictly beautiful, there was an expression of sweet animation in her physiognomy which was highly attractive: her eye

was full of summer lightning, and there was an arch dimple in her smile, which seemed to irradiate her whole countenance. She was quite a young woman, hardly older than Myra. What most distinguished her was the harmony of her whole person; her graceful figure, her fair and finely moulded shoulders, her pretty teeth and her small extremities, seemed to blend with and become the soft vivacity of her winning glance.

'Lady Montfort looks well to-night,' said the neighbour of Myra.

'And is that Lady Montfort? Do you know, I never saw her before.'

'Yes; that is the famous Berengaria, the Queen of Society and the genius of Whiggism.'

In the evening, a great lady, who was held to have the finest voice in society, favoured them with a splendid specimen of her commanding skill, and then Adriana was induced to gratify her friends with a song, 'only one song,' and that only on condition that Myra should accompany her. Miss Neuchatel had a sweet and tender voice, and it had been finely cultivated; she would have been more

than charming if she had only taken interest in anything she herself did, or believed for a moment that she could interest others. When she ceased, a gentleman approached the instrument and addressed her in terms of sympathy and deferential praise. Myra recognised the knight of the garter who had sat next to Lady Montfort. He was somewhat advanced in middle life, tall and of a stately presence, with a voice more musical even than the tones which had recently enchanted everyone. His countenance was impressive, a truly Olympian brow, but the lower part of the face indicated not feebleness, but flexibility, and his mouth was somewhat sensuous. His manner was at once winning; natural, and singularly unaffected, and seemed to sympathise entirely with those whom he addressed.

'But I have never been at Hainault,' said the gentleman, continuing a conversation, 'and therefore could not hear the nightingales. I am content you have brought one of them to town.'

'Nightingales disappear in June,' said Miss Ferrars; 'so our season will be short.'

'And where do they travel to?' asked the gentleman.

'Ah! that is a mystery,' said Myra. 'You must ask Miss Neuchatel.'

'But she will not tell me,' said the gentleman, for in truth Miss Neuchatel, though he had frequently addressed her, had scarcely opened her lips.

'Tell your secret, Adriana,' said Miss Ferrars, trying to force her to converse.

'Adriana!' said the gentleman. 'What a beautiful name! You look with that flower, Miss Neuchatel, like a bride of Venice.'

'Nay,' said Myra; 'the bride of Venice was a stormy ocean.'

'And have you a Venetian name?' asked the gentleman.

There was a pause, and then Miss Neuchatel, with an effort, murmured, 'She has a very pretty name. Her name is Myra.'

'She seems to deserve it,' said the gentleman.

'So you like my daughter's singing,' said Mr. Neuchatel, coming up to them. 'She does not much like singing in public, but she

is a very good girl, and always gives me a song when I come home from business.'

'Fortunate man!' said the gentleman. 'I wish somebody would sing to me when I come home from business.'

'You should marry, my lord,' said Mr. Neuchatel, 'and get your wife to sing to you. Is it not so, Miss Ferrars? By the bye, I ought to introduce you to—Lord Roehampton.'

CHAPTER III.

THE Earl of Roehampton was the strongest member of the government, except, of course, the premier himself. He was the man from whose combined force and flexibility of character the country had confidence that in all their councils there would be no lack of courage, yet tempered with adroit discretion. Lord Roehampton, though an Englishman, was an Irish peer, and was resolved to remain so, for he fully appreciated the position, which united social distinction with the power of a seat in the House of Commons. He was a very ambitious, and, as it was thought, worldly man, deemed even by many to be unscrupulous, and yet he was romantic. A great favourite in society, and especially with the softer sex, somewhat late in life, he had married suddenly a beautiful woman, who was

without fortune, and not a member of the enchanted circle in which he flourished. The union had been successful, for Lord Roehampton was gifted with a sweet temper, and, though people said he had no heart, with a winning tenderness of disposition or at least of manner which at the same time charmed and soothed. He had been a widower for two years, and the world was of opinion that he ought to marry again, and form this time a becoming alliance. In addition to his many recommendations he had now the inestimable reputation, which no one had ever contemplated for him, of having been a good husband.

Berengaria, Countess of Montfort, was a great friend of Lord Roehampton. She was accustomed to describe herself as 'the last of his conquests,' and though Lord Roehampton read characters and purposes with a glance, and was too sagacious to be deceived by anyone, even by himself, his gratified taste, for he scarcely had vanity, cherished the bright illusion of which he was conscious, and he responded to Lady Montfort half sportively,

half seriously, with an air of flattered devotion. Lord Roehampton had inherited an ample estate, and he had generally been in office; for he served his apprenticeship under Perceval and Liverpool, and changed his party just in time to become a member of the Cabinet of 1831. Yet with all these advantages, whether it were the habit of his life, which was ever profuse, or that neglect of his private interests which almost inevitably accompanies the absorbing duties of public life, his affairs were always somewhat confused, and Lady Montfort, who wished to place him on a pinnacle, had resolved that he should marry an heiress. After long observation and careful inquiry and prolonged reflection, the lady she had fixed upon was Miss Neuchatel; and she it was who had made Lord Roehampton cross the room and address Adriana after her song.

'He is not young,' reasoned Lady Montfort to herself, 'but his mind and manner are young, and that is everything. I am sure I meet youth every day who, compared with Lord Roehampton, could have no chance with

my sex—men who can neither feel, nor think, nor converse. And then he is famous, and powerful, and fashionable, and knows how to talk to women. And this must all tell with a banker's daughter, dying, of course, to be a *grande dame*. It will do. He may not be young, but he is irresistible. And the father will like it, for he told me in confidence, at dinner, that he wished Lord Roehampton to be prime minister ; and with this alliance he will be.'

The plot being devised by a fertile brain never wanting in expedients, its development was skilfully managed, and its accomplishment anticipated with confidence. It was remarkable with what dexterity the Neuchatel family and Lord Roehampton were brought together. Berengaria's lord and master was in the country, which he said he would not quit; but this did not prevent her giving delightful little dinners and holding select assemblies on nights when there was no dreadful House of Commons, and Lord Roehampton could be present. On most occasions, and especially on these latter ones, Lady Montfort

could not endure existence without her dear Adriana. Mr. Neuchatel, who was a little in the plot, who at least smiled when Berengaria alluded to her enterprise, was not wanting in his contributions to its success. He hardly ever gave one of his famous banquets to which Lord Roehampton was not invited, and, strange to say, Lord Roehampton, who had the reputation of being somewhat difficult on this head, always accepted the invitations. The crowning social incident, however, was when Lord Roehampton opened his own house for the first time since his widowhood, and received the Neuchatels at a banquet not inferior to their own. This was a great triumph for Lady Montfort, who thought the end was at hand.

'Life is short,' she said to Lord Roehampton that evening. 'Why not settle it to-night?'

'Well,' said Lord Roehampton, 'you know I never like anything precipitate. Besides, why should the citadel surrender when I have hardly entered on my first parallel?'

'Ah! those are old-fashioned tactics,' said Lady Montfort.

'Well, I suppose I am an old-fashioned man.'

'Be serious, now. I want it settled before Easter. I must go down to my lord then, and even before; and I should like to see this settled before we separate.'

'Why does not Montfort come up to town?' said Lord Roehampton. 'He is wanted.'

'Well,' said Lady Montfort, with half a sigh, 'it is no use talking about it. He will not come. Our society bores him, and he must be amused. I write to him every day, and sometimes twice a day, and pass my life in collecting things to interest him. I would never leave him for a moment, only I know then that he would get wearied of me; and he thinks now—at least, he once said so—that he has never had a dull moment in my company.'

'How can he find amusement in the country?' said Lord Roehampton. 'There is

no sport now, and a man cannot always be reading French novels.'

'Well, I send amusing people down to him,' said Berengaria. 'It is difficult to arrange, for he does not like toadies, which is so unreasonable, for I know many toadies who are very pleasant. Treeby is with him now, and that is excellent, for Treeby contradicts him, and is scientific as well as fashionable, and gives him the last news of the sun as well as of White's. I want to get this great African traveller to go down to him; but one can hardly send a perfect stranger as a guest. I wanted Treeby to take him, but Treeby refused—men are so selfish. Treeby could have left him there, and the traveller might have remained a week, told all he had seen, and as much more as he liked. My lord cannot stand Treeby more than two days, and Treeby cannot stand my lord for a longer period, and that is why they are such friends.'

'A sound basis of agreement,' said Lord Roehampton. 'I believe absence is often a great element of charm.'

'But, à nos moutons,' resumed Lady

Montfort. 'You see now why I am so anxious for a conclusion of our affair. I think it is ripe?'

'Why do you?' said Lord Roehampton.

'Well, she must be very much in love with you.'

'Has she told you so?'

'No; but she looks in love.'

'She never has told me so,' said Lord Roehampton.

'Have you told her?'

'Well, I have not,' said her companion. 'I like the family—all of them. I like Neuchatel particularly. I like his house and style of living. You always meet nice people there, and hear the last thing that has been said or done all over the world. It is a house where you are sure not to be dull.'

'You have described a perfect home,' said Lady Montfort, 'and it awaits you.'

'Well, I do not know,' said Lord Roehampton. 'Perhaps I am fastidious, perhaps I am content; to be noticed sometimes by a Lady Montfort should, I think, satisfy any man.'

'Well, that is gallant, but it is not business, my dear lord. You can count on my devotion even when you are married; but I want to see you on a pinnacle, so that if anything happens there shall be no question who is to be the first man in this country.'

CHAPTER IV.

THE meeting of parliament caused also the return of Waldershare to England, and brought life and enjoyment to our friends in Warwick Street. Waldershare had not taken his seat in the autumn session. After the general election, he had gone abroad with Lord Beaumaris, the young nobleman who had taken them to the Derby, and they had seen and done many strange things. During all their peregrinations, however, Waldershare maintained a constant correspondence with Imogene, occasionally sending her a choice volume, which she was not only to read, but to prove her perusal of it by forwarding to him a criticism of its contents.

Endymion was too much pleased to meet Waldershare again, and told him of the kind of intimacy he had formed with Colonel Albert

and all about the baron. Waldershare was much interested in these details, and it was arranged that an opportunity should be taken to make the colonel and Waldershare acquainted.

This, however, was not an easy result to bring about, for Waldershare insisted on its not occurring formally, and as the colonel maintained the utmost reserve with the household, and Endymion had no room of recep tion, weeks passed over without Waldershare knowing more of Colonel Albert personally than sometimes occasionally seeing him mount his horse.

In the meantime life in Warwick Street, so far as the Rodney family were concerned, appeared to have re-assumed its pleasant, and what perhaps we are authorised in styling its normal condition. They went to the play two or three times a week, and there Waldershare or Lord Beaumaris, frequently both, always joined them ; and then they came home to supper, and then they smoked ; and sometimes there was a little singing, and sometimes a little whist. Occasionally there

was only conversation, that is to say, Waldershare held forth, dilating on some wondrous theme, full of historical anecdote, and dazzling paradox, and happy phrase. All listened with interest, even those who did not understand him. Much of his talk was addressed really to Beaumaris, whose mind he was forming, as well as that of Imogene. Beaumaris was an hereditary Whig, but had not personally committed himself, and the ambition of Waldershare was to transform him not only into a Tory, but one of the old rock, a real Jacobite. 'Is not the Tory party,' Waldershare would exclaim, 'a succession of heroic spirits, "beautiful and swift," ever in the van, and foremost of their age?—Hobbes and Bolingbroke, Hume and Adam Smith, Wyndham and Cobham, Pitt and Grenville, Canning and Huskisson?—Are not the principles of Toryism those popular rights which men like Shippen and Hynde Cotton flung in the face of an alien monarch and his mushroom aristocracy?—Place bills, triennial bills, opposition to standing armies, to peerage bills?—Are not the traditions of the

Tory party the noblest pedigree in the world? Are not its illustrations that glorious martyrology, that opens with the name of Falkland and closes with the name of Canning?'

'I believe it is all true,' whispered Lord Beaumaris to Sylvia, who had really never heard of any of these gentlemen before, but looked most sweet and sympathetic.

'He is a wonderful man—Mr. Waldershare,' said Mr. Vigo to Rodney, 'but I fear not practical.'

One day, not very long after his return from his travels, Waldershare went to breakfast with his uncle, Mr. Sidney Wilton, now a cabinet minister, still unmarried, and living in Grosvenor Square. Notwithstanding the difference of their politics, an affectionate intimacy subsisted between them; indeed Waldershare was a favourite of his uncle, who enjoyed the freshness of his mind, and quite appreciated his brilliancy of thought and speech, his quaint reading and effervescent imagination.

'And so you think we are in for life,

George,' said Mr. Wilton, taking a piece of toast. 'I do not.'

'Well, I go upon this,' said Waldershare. 'It is quite clear that Peel has nothing to offer the country, and the country will not rally round a negation. When he failed in '34 they said there had not been sufficient time for the reaction to work. Well, now, since then, it has had nearly three years, during which you fellows have done everything to outrage every prejudice of the constituency, and yet they have given you a majority.'

'Yes, that is all very well,' replied Mr. Wilton, 'but we are the Liberal shop, and we have no Liberal goods on hand; we are the party of movement and must perforce stand still. The fact is, all the great questions are settled. No one will burn his fingers with the Irish Church again, in this generation certainly not, probably in no other; you could not get ten men together in any part of the country to consider the corn laws; I must confess I regret it. I still retain my opinion that a moderate fixed duty would be

a wise arrangement, but I quite despair in my time of any such advance of opinion ; as for the ballot, it is hardly tolerated in debating societies. The present government, my dear George, will expire from inanition. I always told the cabinet they were going on too fast. They should have kept back municipal reform. It would have carried us on for five years. It was our only *pièce de résistance.*'

'I look upon the House of Commons as a mere vestry,' said Waldershare. 'I believe it to be completely used up. Reform has dished it. There are no men, and naturally, because the constituencies elect themselves, and the constituencies are the most mediocre of the nation. The House of Commons now is like a spendthrift living on his capital. The business is done and the speeches are made by men formed in the old school. The influence of the House of Commons is mainly kept up by old social traditions. I believe if the eldest sons of peers now members would all accept the Chiltern hundreds, and the house thus cease to be fashionable, before a year was

past, it would be as odious and as contemptible as the Rump Parliament.'

'Well, you are now the eldest son of a peer,' said Sidney Wilton, smiling. 'Why do you not set an example, instead of spending your father's substance and your own in fighting a corrupt borough?'

'I am *vox clamantis*,' said Waldershare. 'I do not despair of its being done. But what I want is some big guns to do it. Let the eldest son of a Tory duke and the eldest son of a Whig duke do the thing on the same day, and give the reason why. If Saxmundham, for example, and Harlaxton would do it, the game would be up.'

'On the contrary,' said Mr. Wilton, 'Saxmundham, I can tell you, will be the new cabinet minister.'

'Degenerate land!' exclaimed Waldershare. 'Ah! in the eighteenth century there was always a cause to sustain the political genius of the country,—the cause of the rightful dynasty.'

'Well, thank God, we have got rid of all those troubles,' said Mr. Wilton.

'Rid of them! I do not know that. I saw a great deal of the Duke of Modena this year, and tried as well as I could to open his mind to the situation.'

'You traitor!' exclaimed Mr. Wilton. 'If I were Secretary of State, I would order the butler to arrest you immediately, and send you to the Tower in a hack cab; but as I am only a President of a Board and your uncle, you will escape.'

'Well, I should think all sensible men,' said Waldershare, 'of all parties will agree, that before we try a republic, it would be better to give a chance to the rightful heir.'

'Well, I am not a republican,' said Mr. Wilton, 'and I think Queen Victoria, particularly if she make a wise and happy marriage, need not much fear the Duke of Modena.'

'He is our sovereign lord, all the same,' said Waldershare. 'I wish he were more aware of it himself. Instead of looking to a restoration to his throne, I found him always harping on the fear of French invasion. I could not make him understand that France was his natural ally, and that without her

help, Charlie was not likely to have his own again.'

'Well, as you admire pretenders, George, I wish you were in my shoes this morning, for I have got one of the most disagreeable interviews on hand which ever fell to my lot.'

'How so, my dear uncle?' said Waldershare, in a tone of sympathy, for he saw that the countenance of Mr. Wilton was disturbed.

'My unhappy ward,' said Mr. Wilton; 'you know, of course, something about him.'

'Well, I was at school and college,' said Waldershare, 'when it all happened. But I have just heard that you had relations with him.'

'The most intimate; and there is the bitterness. There existed between his mother Queen Agrippina and myself ties of entire friendship. In her last years and in her greatest adversity she appealed to me to be the guardian of her son. He inherited all her beauty and apparently all her sweetness of disposition. I took the greatest pains with him. He was at Eton, and did well there.

He was very popular ; I never was so deceived in a boy in my life. I thought him the most docile of human beings, and that I had gained over him an entire influence. I am sure it would have been exercised for his benefit. In short, I may say it now, I looked upon him as a son, and he certainly would have been my heir ; and yet all this time, from his seventeenth year, he was immersed in political intrigue, and carrying on plots against the sovereign of his country, even under my own roof.'

'How very interesting!' said Waldershare.

'It may be interesting to you ; I know what it cost me. The greatest anxiety and sorrow, and even nearly compromised my honour. Had I not a large-hearted chief and a true man of the world to deal with, I must have retired from the government.'

'How could he manage it?' said Waldershare.

'You have no conception of the devices and resources of the secret societies of Europe,' said Mr. Wilton. 'His drawing-master, his

fencing-master, his dancing-master, all his professors of languages, who delighted me by their testimony to his accomplishments and their praises of his quickness and assiduity, were active confederates in bringing about events which might have occasioned an European war. He left me avowedly to pay a visit in the country, and I even received letters from him with the postmark of the neighbouring town; letters all prepared beforehand. My first authentic information as to his movements was to learn, that he had headed an invading force, landed on the shores which he claimed as his own, was defeated and a prisoner.'

'I remember it,' said Waldershare. 'I had just then gone up to St. John's, and I remember reading it with the greatest excitement.'

'All this was bad enough,' said Mr. Wilton, 'but this is not my sorrow. I saved him from death, or at least a dreadful imprisonment. He was permitted to sail to America on his parole that he would never return to Europe, and I was required, and on his solemn appeal

I consented, to give my personal engagement that the compact should be sacred. Before two years had elapsed, supported all this time, too, by my bounty, there was an attempt, almost successful, to assassinate the king, and my ward was discovered and seized in the capital. This time he was immured, and for life, in the strongest fortress of the country; but secret societies laugh at governments, and though he endured a considerable imprisonment, the world has recently been astounded by hearing that he had escaped. Yes; he is in London and has been here, though in studied obscurity, for some little time. He has never appealed to me until within these few days, and now only on the ground that there are some family affairs which cannot be arranged without my approval. I had great doubts whether I should receive him. I feel I ought not to have done so. But I hesitated, and I know not what may be the truth about women, but of this I am quite sure, the man who hesitates is lost.'

'How I should like to be present at the interview, my dear uncle!' said Waldershare.

'And I should not be sorry to have a witness,' said Mr. Wilton, 'but it is impossible. I am ashamed to say how unhinged I feel; no person, and no memories, ought to exercise such an influence over one. To tell you the truth, I encouraged your pleasant gossip at breakfast by way of distraction at this moment, and now——'

At this moment, the groom of the chambers entered and announced 'His royal highness, Prince Florestan.'

Mr. Wilton, who was too agitated to speak, waved his hand to Waldershare to retire, and his nephew vanished. As Waldershare was descending the staircase, he drew back on a landing-place to permit the prince to advance undisturbed. The prince apparently did not observe him, but when Waldershare caught the countenance of the visitor, he started.

CHAPTER V.

'I KNOW, sir, you are prejudiced against me,' said Prince Florestan, bowing before Mr. Wilton with a sort of haughty humility, 'and therefore I the more appreciate your condescension in receiving me.'

'I have no wish to refer to the past,' said Mr. Wilton somewhat sternly. 'You mentioned in your letter that my co-operation was necessary with reference to your private affairs, of which I once was a trustee, and under those circumstances I felt it my duty to accede to your request. I wish our communication to be limited to that business.'

'It shall be so strictly,' said the prince; 'you may remember, sir, that at the unhappy period when we were deprived of our throne, the name of Queen Agrippina was inscribed on the great book of the state for a consider-

able sum, for which the credit of the state was pledged to her. It was strictly her private property, and had mainly accrued through the sale of the estates of her ancestors. This sum was confiscated, and several other amounts, which belonged to members of our house and to our friends. It was an act of pure rapine, so gross, that as time revolved, and the sense of justice gradually returned to the hearts of men, restitution was made in every instance except my own, though I have reason to believe that individual case was the strongest. My bankers, the house of Neuchatel, who have much interested themselves in this matter, and have considerable influence with the government that succeeded us, have brought things to this pass, that we have reason to believe our claim would be conceded, if some of the foreign governments, and especially the government of this country, would signify that the settlement would not be disagreeable to them.' And the prince ceased, and raising his eyes, which were downcast as he spoke, looked Mr. Wilton straight in the face.

'Before such a proposal could even be considered by Her Majesty's Government,' said Mr. Wilton with a reddening cheek, 'the intimation must be made to them by authority. If the minister of your country has such an intimation to make to ours, he should address himself to the proper quarter, to Lord Roehampton.'

'I understand,' said Prince Florestan; 'but governments, like individuals, sometimes shrink from formality. The government of my country will act on the intimation, but they do not care to make it an affair of despatches.'

'There is only one way of transacting business,' said Mr. Wilton, frigidly, and as if, so far as he was concerned, the interview was ended.

'I have been advised on high authority,' said Prince Florestan, speaking very slowly, 'that if any member of the present cabinet will mention in conversation to the representative of my country here, that the act of justice would not be disagreeable to the British Government, the affair is finished.'

'I doubt whether any one of my colleagues would be prepared to undertake a personal interference of that kind with a foreign government,' said Mr. Wilton stiffly. 'For my own part, I have had quite enough of such interpositions never to venture on them again.'

'The expression of feeling desired would involve no sort of engagement,' said the imperturbable prince.

'That depends on the conscience of the individual who interferes. No man of honour would be justified in so interposing if he believed he was thus furnishing arms against the very government of which he solicited the favour.'

'But why should he believe this?' asked the prince with great calmness.

'I think upon reflection,' said Mr. Wilton, taking up at the same time an opened letter which was before him, as if he wished to resume the private business on which he had been previously engaged, 'that your royal highness might find very adequate reasons for the belief.'

'I would put this before you with great deference, sir,' said the prince. 'Take my own case; is it not more likely that I should lead that life of refined retirement, which I really desire, were I in possession of the means to maintain such a position with becoming dignity, than if I were distressed, and harassed, and disgusted, every day, with sights and incidents which alike outrage my taste and self-respect? It is not prosperity, according to common belief, that makes conspirators.'

'You *were* in a position, and a refined position,' rejoined Mr. Wilton sharply; 'you had means adequate to all that a gentlemen could desire, and might have been a person of great consideration, and you wantonly destroyed all this.'

'It might be remembered that I was young.'

'Yes, you were young, very young, and your folly was condoned. You might have begun life again, for to the world at least you were a man of honour. You had not deceived

the world, whatever you might have done to others.'

'If I presume to make another remark,' said the prince calmly, but pale, 'it is only, believe me, sir, from the profound respect I feel for you. Do not misunderstand these feelings, sir. They are not unbecoming the past. Now that my mother has departed, there is no one to whom I am attached except yourself. I have no feeling whatever towards any other human being. All my thought and all my sentiment are engrossed by my country. But pardon me, dear sir, for so let me call you, if I venture to say that, in your decision on my conduct, you have never taken into consideration the position which I inherited.'

'I do not follow you, sir.'

'You never will remember, that I am the child of destiny,' said Prince Florestan. 'That destiny will again place me on the throne of my fathers. That is as certain as I am now speaking to you. But destiny for its fulfilment ordains action. Its decrees are in-

exorable, but they are obscure, and the being whose career it directs is as a man travelling in a dark night; he reaches his goal even without the aid of stars or moon.'

'I really do not understand what destiny means,' said Mr. Wilton. 'I understand what conduct means, and I recognise that it should be regulated by truth and honour. I think a man had better have nothing to do with destiny, particularly if it is to make him forfeit his parole.'

'Ah! sir, I well know that on that head you entertain a great prejudice in my respect. Believe me it is not just. Even lawyers acknowledge that a contract which is impossible cannot be violated. My return from America was inevitable. The aspirations of a great people and of many communities required my presence in Europe. My return was the natural development of the irresistible principle of historical necessity.'

'Well, that principle is not recognised by Her Majesty's Ministers,' said Mr. Wilton, and both himself and the prince seemed to rise at the same time.

'I thank you, sir, for this interview,' said his royal highness. 'You will not help me, but what I require will happen by some other means. It is necessary, and therefore it will occur.'

The prince remounted his horse, and rode off quickly till he reached the Strand, where obstacles to rapid progress commenced, and though impatient, it was some time before he reached Bishopsgate Street. He entered the spacious courtyard of a noble mansion, and, giving his horse to the groom, inquired for Mr. Neuchatel, to whom he was at once ushered,—seated in a fine apartment at a table covered with many papers.

'Well, my prince,' said Mr. Neuchatel with a smiling eye, 'what brings such a great man into the City to-day? Have you seen your great friend?' And then Prince Florestan gave Mr. Neuchatel a succinct but sufficient summary of his recent interview.

'Ah!' said Mr. Neuchatel, 'so it is, so it is; I dare say if you were received at St. James', Mr. Sidney Wilton would not be so very particular; but we must take things as

we find them. If our fine friends will not help us, you must try us poor business men in the City. We can manage things here sometimes which puzzle them at the West End. I saw you were disturbed when you came in. Put on a good countenance. Nobody should ever look anxious except those who have no anxiety. I dare say you would like to know how your account is. I will send for it. It is not so bad as you think. I put a thousand pounds to it in the hope that your fine friend would help us, but I shall not take it off again. My Louis is going to-night to Paris, and he shall call upon the ministers and see what can be done. In the meantime, good appetite, sir. I am going to luncheon, and there is a place for you. And I will show you my Gainsborough that I have just bought, from a family for whom it was painted. The face is divine, very like our Miss Ferrars. I am going to send the picture down to Hainault. I won't tell you what I gave for it, because perhaps you would tell my wife and she would be very angry. She would want the money for an infant school.

But I think she has schools enough. Now to lunch.'

On the afternoon of this day there was half-holiday at the office, and Endymion had engaged to accompany Waldershare on some expedition. They had been talking together in his room where Waldershare was finishing his careless toilette, which however was never finished, and they had just opened the house door and were sallying forth when Colonel Albert rode up. He gave a kind nod to Endymion, but did not speak, and the companions went on. 'By the bye, Ferrars,' said Waldershare, pressing his arm and bubbling with excitement, 'I have found out who your colonel is. It is a wondrous tale, and I will tell it all to you as we go on.'

CHAPTER VI.

ENDYMION had now passed three years of his life in London, and considering the hard circumstances under which he had commenced this career, he might on the whole look back to those years without dissatisfaction. Three years ago he was poor and friendless, utterly ignorant of the world, and with nothing to guide him but his own good sense. His slender salary had not yet been increased, but with the generosity and aid of his sister and the liberality of Mr. Vigo, he was easy in his circumstances. Through the Rodneys, he had become acquainted with a certain sort of miscellaneous life, a knowledge of which is highly valuable to a youth, but which is seldom attained without risk. Endymion, on the contrary, was always guarded from danger. Through his most unexpected connection with the Neuchatel family, he had

seen something of life in circles of refinement and high consideration, and had even caught glimpses of that great world of which he read so much and heard people talk more, the world of the Lord Roehamptons and the Lady Montforts, and all those dazzling people whose sayings and doings form the taste, and supply the conversation, and leaven the existence of admiring or wondering millions.

None of these incidents, however, had induced any change in the scheme of his existence. Endymion was still content with his cleanly and airy garret; still dined at Joe's; was still sedulous at his office, and always popular with his fellow clerks. Seymour Hicks, indeed, who studied the 'Morning Post' with intentness, had discovered the name of Endymion in the elaborate lists of attendants on Mrs. Neuchatel's receptions, and had duly notified the important event to his colleagues; but Endymion was not severely bantered on the occasion, for, since the withdrawal of St. Barbe from the bureau, the stock of envy at Somerset House was sensibly diminished.

His lodging at the Rodneys', however, had brought Endymion something more valuable than an innocuous familiarity with their various and suggestive life. In the friendship of Waldershare he found a rich compensation for being withdrawn from his school and deprived of his university. The care of his father had made Endymion a good classical scholar, and he had realised a degree of culture which it delighted the brilliant and eccentric Waldershare to enrich and to complete. Waldershare guided his opinions, and directed his studies, and formed his taste. Alone at night in his garret, there was no solitude, for he had always some book or some periodical, English or foreign, with which Waldershare had supplied him, and which he assured Endymion it was absolutely necessary that he should read and master.

Nor was his acquaintance with Baron Sergius less valuable, or less fruitful of results. He too became interested in Endymion, and poured forth to him, apparently without reserve, all the treasures of his vast experience of men and things, especially with reference

to the conduct of external affairs. He initiated him in the cardinal principles of the policies of different nations; he revealed to him the real character of the chief actors in the scene. 'The first requisite,' Baron Sergius would say, 'in the successful conduct of public affairs is a personal acquaintance with the statesmen engaged. It is possible that events may not depend now, so much as they did a century ago, on individual feeling, but, even if prompted by general principles, their application and management are always coloured by the idiosyncrasy of the chief actors. The great advantage which your Lord Roehampton, for example, has over all his colleagues in *la haute politique*, is that he was one of your plenipotentiaries at the Congress of Vienna. There he learned to gauge the men who govern the world. Do you think a man like that, called upon to deal with a Metternich or a Pozzo, has no advantage over an individual who never leaves his chair in Downing Street except to kill grouse? Pah! Metternich and Pozzo know very well that Lord Roehampton knows them, and they set

about affairs with him in a totally different spirit from that with which they circumvent some statesman who has issued from the barricades of Paris.'

Nor must it be forgotten that his debating society and the acquaintance which he had formed there, were highly beneficial to Endymion. Under the roof of Mr. Bertie Tremaine he enjoyed the opportunity of forming an acquaintance with a large body of young men of breeding, of high education, and full of ambition, that was a substitute for the society, becoming his youth and station, which he had lost by not going to the university.

With all these individuals, and with all their circles, Endymion was a favourite. No doubt his good looks, his mien—which was both cheerful and pensive—his graceful and quiet manners, all told in his favour, and gave him a good start, but further acquaintance always sustained the first impression. He was intelligent and well-informed, without any alarming originality, or too positive convictions. He listened not only with patience but with interest to all, and ever avoided con-

troversy. Here are some of the elements of a man's popularity.

What was his intellectual reach, and what his real character, it was difficult at this time to decide. He was still very young, only on the verge of his twentieth year; and his character had no doubt been influenced, it might be suppressed, by the crushing misfortunes of his family. The influence of his sister was supreme over him. She had never reconciled herself to their fall. She had existed only on the solitary idea of regaining their position, and she had never omitted an occasion to impress upon him that he had a great mission, and that, aided by her devotion, he would fulfil it. What his own conviction on this subject was may be obscure. Perhaps he was organically of that cheerful and easy nature, which is content to enjoy the present, and not brood over the past. The future may throw light upon all these points; at present it may be admitted that the three years of seemingly bitter and mortifying adversity have not been altogether wanting in beneficial elements in the formation of his character and the fashioning of his future life.

CHAPTER VII.

Lady Montfort heard with great satisfaction from Mr. Neuchatel that Lord Roehampton was going to pay a visit to Hainault at Easter, and that he had asked himself. She playfully congratulated Mrs. Neuchatel on the subject, and spoke as if the affair was almost concluded. That lady, however, received the intimation with a serious, not to say distressed countenance. She said she should be grieved to lose Adriana under any circumstances; but if her marriage in time was a necessity, she trusted she might be united to some one who would not object to becoming a permanent inmate of their house. What she herself desired for her daughter was an union with some clergyman, and if possible, the rector of their own parish. But it was too charming a dream to realise. The rectory at Hainault

was almost in the Park, and was the prettiest house in the world, with the most lovely garden. She herself much preferred it to the great mansion—and so on.

Lady Montfort stared at her with impatient astonishment, and then said, 'Your daughter, Mrs. Neuchatel, ought to make an alliance which would place her at the head of society.'

'What a fearful destiny,' said Mrs. Neuchatel, 'for anyone, but overwhelming for one who must feel the whole time that she occupies a position not acquired by her personal qualities!'

'Adriana is pretty,' said Lady Montfort. 'I think her more than pretty; she is highly accomplished and in every way pleasing. What can you mean, then, my dear madam, by supposing she would occupy a position not acquired by her personal qualities?'

Mrs. Neuchatel sighed and shook her head, and then said, 'We need not have any controversy on this subject. I have no reason to believe there is any foundation for my fears. We all like and admire Lord Roehampton.

It is impossible not to admire and like him. So great a man, and yet so gentle and so kind, so unaffected—I would say, so unsophisticated; but he has never given the slightest intimation, either to me or her father, that he seriously admired Adriana, and I am sure if he had said anything to her she would have told us.'

'He is always here,' said Lady Montfort, 'and he is a man who used to go nowhere except for form. Besides, I know that he admires her, that he is in love with her, and I have not a doubt that he has invited himself to Hainault in order to declare his feelings to her.'

'How very dreadful!' exclaimed Mrs. Neuchatel. 'What are we to do?'

'To do!' said Lady Montfort; 'why, sympathise with his happiness, and complete it. You will have a son-in-law of whom you may well be proud, and Adriana a husband who, thoroughly knowing the world, and women, and himself, will be devoted to her; will be a guide and friend, a guide that will never lecture, and a friend who will always

charm, for there is no companion in the world like him, and I think I ought to know,' added Lady Montfort, 'for I always tell him I was the last of his conquests, and I shall ever be grateful to him for his having spared to me so much of his society.'

'Adriana on this matter will decide for herself,' said Mrs. Neuchatel in a serious tone, and with a certain degree of dignity. 'Neither Mr. Neuchatel, nor myself, have ever attempted to control her feelings in this respect.'

'Well, I am now about to see Adriana,' said Lady Montfort; 'I know she is at home. 'If I had not been obliged to go to Princedown, I would have asked you to let me pass Easter at Hainault myself.'

On this very afternoon, when Myra, who had been walking in Regent's Park with her brother, returned home, she found Adriana agitated, and really in tears.

'What is all this, dearest?' inquired her friend.

'I am too unhappy,' sobbed Adriana, and then she told Myra, that she had had a visit from Lady Montfort, and all that had

occurred in it. Lady Montfort had absolutely congratulated her on her approaching alliance with Lord Roehampton, and when she altogether disclaimed it, and expressed her complete astonishment at the supposition, Lady Montfort had told her she was not justified in giving Lord Roehampton so much encouragement and trifling with a man of his high character and position.

'Fancy my giving encouragement to Lord Roehampton!' exclaimed Adriana, and she threw her arms round the neck of the friend who was to console her.

'I agree with Lady Montfort,' said Myra, releasing herself with gentleness from her distressed friend. 'It may have been unconsciously on your part, but I think you have encouraged Lord Roehampton. He is constantly conversing with you, and he is always here, where he never was before, and, as Lady Montfort says, why should he have asked himself to pass the Easter at Hainault if it were not for your society?'

'He invited himself to Hainault, because he is so fond of papa,' said Adriana.

'So much the better, if he is to be your husband. That will be an additional element of domestic happiness.'

'O! Myra, that you should say such things!' exclaimed Adriana.

'What things?'

'That I should marry Lord Roehampton.'

'I never said anything of the kind. Whom you should marry is a question you must decide for yourself. All that I said was, that if you marry Lord Roehampton, it is fortunate he is so much liked by Mr. Neuchatel.'

'I shall not marry Lord Roehampton,' said Adriana with some determination, 'and if he has condescended to think of marrying me,' she continued, 'as Lady Montfort says, I think his motives are so obvious that if I felt for him any preference it would be immediately extinguished.'

'Ah! now you are going to ride your hobby, my dear Adriana. On that subject we never can agree; were I an heiress, I should have as little objection to be married for my fortune as my face. Husbands, as I have

heard, do not care for the latter too long. Have more confidence in yourself, Adriana. If Lord Roehampton wishes to marry you, it is that he is pleased with you personally, that he appreciates your intelligence, your culture, your accomplishments, your sweet disposition, and your gentle nature. If in addition to these gifts you have wealth, and even great wealth, Lord Roehampton will not despise it, will not—for I wish to put it frankly—be uninfluenced by the circumstances, for Lord Roehampton is a wise man; but he would not marry you if he did not believe that you would make for him a delightful companion in life, that you would adorn his circle and illustrate his name.'

'Ah! I see you are all in the plot against me,' said Adriana. 'I have no friend.'

'My dear Adriana, I think you are unreasonable; I could say even unkind.'

'Oh! pardon me, dear Myra,' said Adriana, 'but I really am so very unhappy.'

'About what? You are your own mistress in this matter. If you do not like to marry Lord Roehampton, nobody will attempt to

control you. What does it signify what Lady Montfort says ? or anybody else, except your own parents, who desire nothing but your happiness ? I should never have mentioned Lord Roehampton to you had you not introduced the subject yourself. And all that I meant to say was, what I repeat, that your creed that no one can wish to marry you except for your wealth is a morbid conviction, and must lead to unhappiness ; that I do not believe that Lord Roehampton is influenced in his overture, if he make one, by any unworthy motive, and that any woman whose heart is disengaged should not lightly repudiate such an advance from such a man, by which, at all events, she should feel honoured.'

'But my heart is engaged,' said Adriana in an almost solemn tone.

'Oh ! that is quite a different thing !' said Myra, turning pale.

'Yes !' said Adriana ; 'I am devoted to one whose name I cannot now mention, perhaps will never mention, but I am devoted to him. Yes !' she added with fire, 'I am not

altogether so weak a thing as the Lady Montforts and some other persons seem to think me—I can feel and decide for myself, and it shall never be said of me that I purchased love.'

CHAPTER VIII.

THERE was to be no great party at Hainault; Lord Roehampton particularly wished that there should be no fine folks asked, and especially no ambassadors. All that he wanted was to enjoy the fresh air, and to ramble in the forest, of which he had heard so much, with the young ladies.

'And, by the bye, Miss Ferrars,' said Mr. Neuchatel, 'we must let what we were talking about the other day drop. Adriana has been with me quite excited about something Lady Montfort said to her. I soothed her and assured her she should do exactly as she liked, and that neither I nor her mother had any other wishes on such a subject than her own. The fact is, I answered Lady Montfort originally only half in earnest. If the thing might have happened, I should have been

content—but it really never rested on my mind, because such matters must always originate with my daughter. Unless they come from her, with me they are mere fancies. But now I want you to help me in another matter, if not more grave, more business-like. My lord must be amused, although it is a family party. He likes his rubber: that we can manage. But there must be two or three persons that he is not accustomed to meet, and yet who will interest him. Now, do you know, Miss Ferrars, whom I think of asking?'

'Not I, my dear sir.'

'What do you think of the colonel?' said Mr. Neuchatel, looking in her face with a rather laughing eye.

'Well, he is very agreeable,' said Myra, 'and many would think interesting, and if Lord Roehampton does not know him, I think he would do very well.'

'Well, but Lord Roehampton knows all about him,' said Mr. Neuchatel.

'Well, that is an advantage,' said Myra.

'I do not know,' said Mr. Neuchatel. 'Life is a very curious thing, eh, Miss Ferrars?

One cannot ask one person to meet another even in one's own home, without going through a sum of moral arithmetic.'

'Is it so ?' said Myra.

'Well, Miss Ferrars,' said Mr. Neuchatel, 'I want your advice and I want your aid; but then it is a long story, at which I am rather a bad hand,' and Mr. Neuchatel hesitated. 'You know,' he said, suddenly resuming, 'you once asked me who Colonel Albert was.'

'But I do not ask you now,' said Myra, 'because I know.'

'Hah, hah!' exclaimed Mr. Neuchatel, much surprised.

'And what you want to know is,' continued Myra, 'whether Lord Roehampton would have any objection to meet Prince Florestan ?'

'That is something; but that is comparatively easy. I think I can manage that. But when they meet—that is the point. But, in the first place, I should like very much to know how you became acquainted with the secret.'

'In a very natural way; my brother was my informant,' she replied.

'Ah! now you see,' continued Mr. Neuchatel, with a serious air, 'a word from Lord Roehampton in the proper quarter might be of vast importance to the prince. He has a large inheritance, and he has been kept out of it unjustly. Our house has done what we could for him, for his mother, Queen Agrippina, was very kind to my father, and the house of Neuchatel never forgets its friends. But we want something else, we want the British Government to intimate that they will not disapprove of the restitution of the private fortune of the prince. I have felt my way with the premier; he is not favourable; he is prejudiced against the prince; and so is the cabinet generally; and yet all difficulties would vanish at a word from Lord Roehampton.'

'Well, this is a good opportunity for you to speak to him,' said Myra.

'Hem!' said Mr. Neuchatel, 'I am not so sure about that. I like Lord Roehampton, and, between ourselves, I wish he were first minister. He understands the Continent, and would keep things quiet. But, do you know, Miss Ferrars, with all his playful, good-tempered

manner, as if he could not say a cross word or do an unkind act, he is a very severe man in business. Speak to him on business, and he is completely changed. His brows knit, he penetrates you with the terrible scrutiny of that deep-set eye ; he is more than stately, he is austere. I have been up to him with deputations—the Governor of the Bank, and all the first men in the City, half of them M.P.s, and they trembled before him like aspens. No, it will not do for me to speak to him, it will spoil his visit. I think the way will be this ; if he has no objection to meet the prince, we must watch whether the prince makes a favourable impression on him, and if that is the case, and Lord Roehampton likes him, what we must do next is this—*you* must speak to Lord Roehampton.'

'I!'

'Yes, Miss Ferrars, you. Lord Roehampton likes ladies. He is never austere to them, even if he refuses their requests, and sometimes he grants them. I thought first of Mrs. Neuchatel speaking to him, but my wife will never interfere in anything in which money is

concerned; then I thought Adriana might express a hope when they were walking in the garden, but now that is all over; and so you alone remain. I have great confidence in you,' added Mr. Neuchatel, 'I think you would do it very well. Besides, my lord rather likes you, for I have observed him often go and sit by you at parties, at our house.'

'Yes, he is very high-bred in that,' said Myra, gravely and rather sadly; 'and the fact of my being a dependent, I have no doubt, influences him.'

'We are all dependents in this house,' said Mr. Neuchatel with his sweetest smile; 'and I depend upon Miss Ferrars.'

Affairs on the whole went on in a promising manner. The weather was delightful, and Lord Roehampton came down to Hainault just in time for dinner, the day after their arrival, and in the highest spirits. He seemed to be enjoying a real holiday; body and mind were in a like state of expansion; he was enchanted with the domain; he was delighted with the mansion, everything pleased and gratified him, and he pleased and gratified

everybody. The party consisted only of themselves, except one of the nephews, with whom indeed Lord Roehampton was already acquainted; a lively youth, a little on the turf, not too much, and this suited Lord Roehampton, who was a statesman of the old aristocratic school, still bred horses, and sometimes ran one, and in the midst of an European crisis could spare an hour to Newmarket. Perhaps it was his only affectation.

Mrs. Neuchatel, by whom he was seated, had the happy gift of conversation; but the party was of that delightful dimension, that it permitted talk to be general. Myra sate next to Lord Roehampton, and he often addressed her. He was the soul of the feast, and yet it is difficult to describe his conversation; it was a medley of graceful whim, interspersed now and then with a very short anecdote of a very famous person, or some deeply interesting reminiscence of some critical event. Every now and then he appealed to Adriana, who sate opposite to him in the round table, and she trusted that her irrepressible smiles would not be interpreted into undue encouragement.

Lord Roehampton had no objection to meet Prince Florestan, provided there were no other strangers, and the incognito was observed. He rather welcomed the proposal, observing he liked to know public men personally; so, you can judge of their calibre, which you never can do from books and newspapers, or the oral reports of their creatures or their enemies. And so on the next day Colonel Albert was expected.

Lord Roehampton did not appear till luncheon; he had received so many boxes from Downing Street which required his attention. 'Business will follow one,' he said; 'yesterday I thought I had baffled it. I do not know what I shall do without my secretaries. I think I shall get you young ladies to assist me.'

'You cannot have better secretaries,' said Mr. Neuchatel; 'Miss Ferrars often helps me.'

Then what was to be done after luncheon? Would he ride, or would he drive? And where should they drive and ride to? But Lord Roehampton did not much care to drive, and was tired of riding. He would rather walk and ramble about Hainault. He wanted

to see the place, and the forest and the fern, and perhaps hear one of those nightingales that they had talked of in Portland Place. But Mrs. Neuchatel did not care to walk, and Mr. Neuchatel, though it was a holiday in the City, had a great many letters to write, and so somehow or other it ended in Lord Roehampton and the two young ladies walking out together, and remaining so long and so late, that Mrs. Neuchatel absolutely contemplated postponing the dinner hour.

'We shall just be in time, dear Mrs. Neuchatel,' said Myra; 'Lord Roehampton has gone up to his room. We have heard a nightingale, and Lord Roehampton insisted upon our sitting on the trunk of a tree till it ceased—and it never ceased.'

Colonel Albert, who had arrived, was presented to Lord Roehampton before dinner. Lord Roehampton received him with stately courtesy. As Myra watched, not without interest, the proceeding, she could scarcely believe, as she marked the lofty grace and somewhat haughty mien of Lord Roehampton, that it could be the same being of frolic and

fancy, and even tender sentiment, with whom she had been passing the preceding hours.

Colonel Albert sate next to Myra at dinner, and Lord Roehampton between Mrs. Neuchatel and her daughter. His manner was different to-day, not less pleased and pleasing, but certainly more restrained. He encouraged Mrs. Neuchatel to occupy the chief part in conversation, and whispered to Adriana, who became somewhat uneasy; but the whispers mainly consisted of his delight in their morning adventures. When he remarked that it was one of the most agreeable days of his life, she became a little alarmed. Then he addressed Colonel Albert across the table, and said that he had heard from Mr. Neuchatel, that the colonel had been in America, and asked some questions about public men, which brought him out. Colonel Albert answered with gentleness and modesty, never at any length, but in language which indicated, on all the matters referred to, thought and discrimination.

'I suppose their society is like the best society in Manchester?' said Lord Roehampton.

'It varies in different cities,' said Colonel Albert. 'In some there is considerable culture, and then refinement of life always follows.'

'Yes, but whatever they may be, they will always be colonial. What is colonial necessarily lacks originality. A country that borrows its language, its laws, and its religion, cannot have its inventive powers much developed. They got civilised very soon, but their civilisation was second-hand.'

'Perhaps their inventive powers may develop themselves in other ways,' said the prince. 'A nation has a fixed quantity of invention, and it will make itself felt.'

'At present,' said Lord Roehampton, 'the Americans, I think, employ their invention in imaginary boundary lines. They are giving us plenty of trouble now about Maine.'

After dinner, they had some music; Lord Roehampton would not play whist. He insisted on comparing the voices of his companions with that of the nightingale of the morning. He talked a great deal to Adriana, and Colonel Albert in the course of the evening much to Myra, and about her brother.

Lord Roehampton more than once had wished to tell her, as he had already told Miss Neuchatel, how delightful had been their morning; but on every occasion he had found her engaged with the colonel.

'I rather like your prince,' he had observed to Mr. Neuchatel, as they came from the dining-room. 'He never speaks without thinking; very reserved, I apprehend. They say, an inveterate conspirator.'

'He has had enough of that,' said Mr. Neuchatel. 'I believe he wants to be quiet.'

'That class of man is never quiet,' said Lord Roehampton.

'But what can he do?' said Mr. Neuchatel.

'What can he not do? Half Europe is in a state of chronic conspiracy.'

'You must keep us right, my dear lord. So long as you are in Downing Street I shall sleep at nights.'

'Miss Ferrars,' said Lord Roehampton abruptly to Mr. Neuchatel, 'must have been the daughter of William Ferrars, one of my great friends in old days. I never knew it till

to-day, and she did not tell me, but it flashed across me from something she said.'

'Yes, she is his daughter, and is in mourning for him at this moment. She has had sorrows,' said Mr. Neuchatel. 'I hope they have ceased. It was one of the happiest days of my life when she entered this family.'

'Ah!' said Lord Roehampton.

The next day, after they had examined the famous stud and stables, there was a riding party, and in the evening Colonel Albert offered to perform some American conjuring tricks, of which he had been speaking in the course of the day. This was a most wonderful performance, and surprised and highly amused everybody. Colonel Albert was the last person who they expected would achieve such marvels; he was so quiet, not to say grave. They could hardly credit that he was the same person as he poured floods of flowers over Myra from her own borrowed pocket-handkerchief, and, without the slightest effort or embarrassment, robbed Lord Roehampton of his watch, and deposited it in Adriana's

bosom. It was evident that he was a complete master of sleight of hand.

'Characteristic!' murmured Lord Roehampton to himself.

It was the day after this, that Myra being in the music room and alone, Lord Roehampton opened the door, looked in, and then said, 'Where is Miss Neuchatel?'

'I think she is on the terrace.'

'Let us try to find her, and have one of our pleasant strolls. I sadly want one, for I have been working very hard all this morning, and half the night.'

'I will be with you, Lord Roehampton, in a moment.'

'Do not let us have anybody else,' he said, as she left the room.

They were soon on the terrace, but Adriana was not there.

'We must find her,' said Lord Roehampton; 'you know her haunts. Ah! what a delight it is to be in this air and this scene after those dreadful boxes! I wish they would turn us out. I think they must soon.'

'Now for the first time,' said Myra, 'Lord Roehampton is not sincere.'

'Then you think me always sincere?' he replied.

'I have no reason to think you otherwise.'

'That is very true,' said Lord Roehampton, 'truer perhaps than you imagine.' Then rather abruptly he said, 'You know Colonel Albert very well?'

'Pretty well. I have seen him here frequently, and he is also a friend of my brother.'

'Ah! a friend of your brother.' Then, after a slight pause, he said, 'He is an interesting man.'

'I think so,' said Myra. 'You know all about him, of course.'

'Very good-looking.'

'Well, he looks unhappy, I think, and worn.'

'One is never worn when one is young,' said Lord Roehampton.

'He must have great anxieties and great sorrows,' said Myra. 'I cannot imagine a position more unfortunate than that of an exiled prince.'

'I can,' said Lord Roehampton. 'To have the feelings of youth and the frame of age.'

Myra was silent, one might say dumbfounded. She had just screwed herself up to the task which Mr. Neuchatel had imposed on her, and was about to appeal to the good offices of Lord Roehampton in favour of the prince, when he had indulged in a remark which was not only somewhat strange, but from the manner in which it was introduced hardly harmonised with her purpose.

'Yes, I would give up everything,' said Lord Roehampton. 'I would even be an exile to be young; to hear that Miss Ferrars deems me interesting and good-looking, though worn.'

'What is going to happen?' thought Myra. 'Will the earth open to receive me!'

'You are silent,' said Lord Roehampton. 'You will not speak, you will not sigh, you will not give a glance of consolation or even pity. But I have spoken too much not to say more. Beautiful, fascinating being, let me at least tell you of my love.'

Myra could not speak, but put her left hand to her face. Gently taking her other hand, Lord Roehampton pressed it to his lips. 'From the first moment I met you, my heart was yours. It was love at first sight; indeed I believe in no other. I was amused with the projects of my friend, and I availed myself of them, but not unfairly. No one can accuse me of trifling with the affections of your sweet companion, and I must do her the justice to say that she did everything to convince me that she shrank from my attentions. But her society was an excuse to enjoy yours. I was an habitual visitor in town that I might cherish my love, and, dare I say it, I came down here to declare it. Do not despise it, dearest of women; it is not worthy of you, but it is not altogether undeserving. It is, as you kindly believed it,—it is sincere!'

CHAPTER IX.

On the following day, Mr. Neuchatel had good-naturedly invited Endymion down to Hainault, and when he arrived there, a servant informed him that Miss Ferrars wished to see him in her room.

It was a long interview and an agitated one, and when she had told her tale, and her brother had embraced her, she sat for a time in silence, holding his hand, and intimating, that, for a while, she wished that neither of them should speak. Suddenly, she resumed, and said, 'Now you know all, dear darling; it is so sudden, and so strange, that you must be almost as much astounded as gratified. What I have sighed for, and prayed for—what, in moments of inspiration, I have sometimes foreseen—has happened. Our degradation is over. I seem to breathe for the first time for

many years. I see a career, ay, and a great one; and what is far more important, I see a career for you.'

'At this moment, dear Myra, think only of yourself.'

'You are myself,' she replied, rather quickly, 'never more so than at this moment;' and then she said in a tone more subdued, and even tender, 'Lord Roehampton has every quality and every accident of life that I delight in; he has intellect, eloquence, courage, great station and power; and, what I ought perhaps more to consider, though I do not, a sweet disposition and a tender heart. There is every reason why we should be happy—yes, very happy. I am sure I shall sympathise with him; perhaps, I may aid him; at least, he thinks so. He is the noblest of men. The world will talk of the disparity of our years; but Lord Roehampton says that he is really the younger of the two, and I think he is right. My pride, my intense pride, never permitted to me any levity of heart.'

'And when is it to happen?' inquired Endymion.

'Not immediately. I could not marry till a year had elapsed after our great sorrow; and it is more agreeable, even to him, that our union should be delayed till the session is over. He wants to leave England; go abroad; have a real holiday. He has always had a dream of travelling in Spain; well, we are to realise the dream. If we could get off at the end of July, we might go to Paris, and then to Madrid, and travel in Andalusia in the autumn, and then catch the packet at Gibraltar, and get home just in time for the November cabinets.'

'Dear Myra! how wonderful it all seems!' involuntarily exclaimed Endymion.

'Yes, but more wonderful things will happen. We have now got a lever to move the world. Understand, my dear Endymion, that nothing is to be announced at present. It will be known only to this family, and the Penruddocks. I am bound to tell them, even immediately; they are friends that never can be forgotten. I have always kept up my correspondence with Mrs. Penruddock. Besides, I shall tell her in confidence, and she is per-

fectly to be depended on. I am going to ask my lord to let Mr. Penruddock marry us.'

'Oh! that will be capital,' said Endymion.

'There is another person, by the bye, who must know it, at least my lord says so,' said Myra, 'and that is Lady Montfort; you have heard of that lady and her plans. Well, she must be told—at least, sooner or later. She will be annoyed, and she will hate me. I cannot help it; everyone is hated by somebody.'

During the three months that had to elapse before the happy day, several incidents occurred that ought to be noted. In the first place, Lady Montfort, though disappointed and very much astonished, bore the communication from Lord Roehampton more kindly than he had anticipated. Lord Roehampton made it by letter, and his letters to women were more happy even than his despatches to ministers, and they were unrivalled. He put the matter in the most skilful form. Myra had been born in a social position not inferior to his own, and was the daughter of one of his early political friends. He did not dilate too much on her charms and captivating qualities, but

sufficiently for the dignity of her who was to become his wife. And then he confessed to Lady Montfort how completely his heart and happiness were set on Lady Roehampton being welcomed becomingly by his friends; he was well aware, that in these matters things did not always proceed as one could wish, but this was the moment, and this the occasion, to test a friend, and he believed he had the dearest, the most faithful, the most fascinating, and the most powerful in Lady Montfort.

'Well, we must put the best face upon it,' exclaimed that lady; 'he was always romantic. But, as he says, or thinks, what is the use of friends if they do not help you in a scrape?'

So Lady Montfort made the acquaintance of Myra, and welcomed her new acquaintance cordially. She was too fine a judge of beauty and deportment not to appreciate them, even when a little prejudice lurked behind. She was amused also, and a little gratified, by being in the secret; presented Myra with a rare jewel, and declared that she should attend the wedding; though when the day arrived, she

was at Princedown, and could not unfortunately leave her lord.

About the end of June, a rather remarkable paragraph appeared in the journal of society:

'We understand that His Royal Highness Prince Florestan, who has been for some little time in this country, has taken the mansion in Carlton Gardens, recently occupied by the Marquis of Katterfelto. The mansion is undergoing very considerable repairs, but it is calculated that it will be completed in time for the reception of His Royal Highness by the end of the autumn; His Royal Highness has taken the extensive moors of Dinnie-whiskie for the coming season.'

In the earlier part of July, the approaching alliance of the Earl of Roehampton with Miss Ferrars, the only daughter of the late Right Honourable William Pitt Ferrars, of Hurstley Hall, in the county of Berks, was announced, and great was the sensation, and innumerable the presents instantly ordered.

But on no one did the announcement produce a greater effect than on Zenobia; that the daughter of her dearest friend should make

so interesting and so distinguished an alliance was naturally most gratifying to her. She wrote to Myra a most impassioned letter, as if they had only separated yesterday, and a still longer and more fervent one to Lord Roehampton; Zenobia and he had been close friends in other days, till he wickedly changed his politics, and was always in office and Zenobia always out. This was never to be forgiven. But the bright lady forgot all this now, and sent to Myra the most wondrous bracelet of precious stones, in which the word 'Souvenir' was represented in brilliants, rubies, and emeralds.

'For my part,' said Myra to Endymion, 'my most difficult task are the bridesmaids. I am to have so many, and know so few. I feel like a recruiting sergeant. I began with Adriana, but my lord helps me very much out of his family, and says, when we have had a few family dinners, all will be right.'

Endymion did not receive the banter he expected at the office. The event was too great for a jest. Seymour Hicks, with a serious countenance, said Ferrars might get

anywhere now,—all the ministerial receptions of course. Jawett said there would be no ministerial receptions soon; they were degrading functions. Clear-headed Trenchard congratulated him quietly, and said, 'I do not think you will stay much longer among us, but we shall always remember you with interest.'

At last the great day arrived, and at St. George's, Hanover Square, the Right Honourable the Earl of Roehampton, K.G., was united to Miss Ferrars. Mr. Penruddock joined their hands. His son Nigel had been invited to assist him, but did not appear, though Myra had written to him. The great world assembled in force, and Endymion observed Mr. and Mrs. Rodney and Imogene in the body of the church. After the ceremony there was an entertainment in Portland Place, and the world ate ortolans and examined the presents. These were remarkable for number and splendour. Myra could not conceal her astonishment at possessing so many friends; but it was the fashion for all Lord Roehampton's acquaintance to make him offerings, and

to solicit his permission to present gifts to his bride. Mr. Neuchatel placed on her brow a diamond tiara, and Mrs. Neuchatel encircled her neck with one of her diamond necklaces. 'I should like to give the other one to Adriana,' she observed, 'but Adriana says that nothing will ever induce her to wear jewels.' Prince Florestan presented Lady Roehampton with a vase which had belonged to his mother, and which had been painted by Boucher for Marie Antoinette. It was matchless, and almost unique.

Not long after this, Lord Beaumaris, with many servants and many guns, took Waldershare and Endymion down with him to Scotland.

CHAPTER X.

THE end of the season is a pang to society. More hopes have been baffled than realised. There is something melancholy in the last ball, though the music ever seems louder, and the lights more glaring than usual. Or it may be, the last entertainment is that hecatomb they call a wedding breakfast, which celebrates the triumph of a rival. That is pleasant. Society, to do it justice, struggles hard to revive in other scenes the excitement that has expired. It sails to Cowes, it scuds to bubbling waters in the pine forests of the continent, it stalks even into Scotland; but it is difficult to restore the romance that has been rudely disturbed, and to gather again together the threads of the intrigue that have been lost in the wild flight of society from that metropolis, which is now described as 'a per-

fect desert'—that is to say, a park or so, two or three squares, and a dozen streets where society lives ; where it dines, and dances, and blackballs, and bets, and spouts.

But to the world in general, the mighty million, to the professional classes, to all men of all business whatever, the end of the season is the beginning of carnival. It is the fulfilment of the dream over which they have been brooding for ten months, which has sustained them in toil, lightened anxiety, and softened even loss. It is air, it is health, it is movement, it is liberty, it is nature—earth, sea, lake, moor, forest, mountain, and river. From the heights of the Engadine to Margate Pier, there is equal rapture, for there is an equal cessation of routine.

Few enjoy a holiday more than a young clerk in a public office, who has been bred in a gentle home, and enjoyed in his boyhood all the pastimes of gentlemen. Now he is ever toiling, with an uncertain prospect of annual relaxation, and living hardly. Once on a time, at the paternal hall, he could shoot, or fish, or ride, every day of his life, as a matter

of course; and now, what would he not give for a good day's sport? Such thoughts had frequently crossed the mind of Endymion when drudging in London during the autumn, and when all his few acquaintances were away. It was, therefore, with no ordinary zest that he looked forward to the unexpected enjoyment of an unstinted share of some of the best shooting in the United Kingdom. And the relaxation and the pastime came just at the right moment, when the reaction, from all the excitement attendant on the marvellous change in his sister's position, would have made him, deprived of her consoling society, doubly sensible of his isolated position.

It so happened that the moors of Lord Beaumaris were contiguous to the celebrated shootings of Dinniewhiskie, which were rented by Prince Florestan, and the opportunity now offered which Waldershare desired of making the acquaintance of the prince in an easy manner. Endymion managed this very cleverly. Waldershare took a great fancy to the prince. He sympathised with him, and imparted to Endymion his belief that they

could not do a better thing than devote their energies to a restoration of his rights. Lord Beaumaris, who hated foreigners, but who was always influenced by Waldershare, also liked the prince, and was glad to be reminded by his mentor that Florestan was half an Englishman, not to say a whole one, for he was an Eton boy. What was equally influential with Lord Beaumaris was, that the prince was a fine shot, and indeed a consummate sportsman, and had in his manners that calm which is rather unusual with foreigners, and which is always pleasing to an English aristocrat. So in time they became intimate, sported much together, and visited each other at their respective quarters. The prince was never alone. What the county paper described as distinguished foreigners were perpetually paying him visits, long or short, and it did not generally appear that these visits were influenced by a love of sport. One individual, who arrived shortly after the prince, remained, and, as was soon known, was to remain permanently. This was a young gentleman, short and swarthy, with flashing

eyes and a black moustache, known by the name of the Duke of St. Angelo, but who was really only a cadet of that illustrious house. The Duke of St. Angelo took the management of the household of the prince—was evidently the controller; servants trembled at his nod, and he rode any horse he liked; he invited guests, and arranged the etiquette of the interior. He said one day very coolly to Waldershare: 'I observe that Lord Beaumaris and his friends never rise when the prince moves.'

'Why should we?'

'His rank is recognised and guaranteed by the Treaty of Vienna,' said the Duke of St. Angelo, with an arrogant air.

'His princely rank,' replied Waldershare, 'but not his royalty.'

'That is a mere refinement,' said the duke contemptuously.

'On the contrary, a clear distinction, and specifically made in the treaty. I do not think the prince himself would desire such a ceremony, and let me recommend you, duke,' added Waldershare, 'not to go out of your

way to insist on these points. They will not increase the prince's popularity.'

'The time will come, and before long, when the Treaty of Vienna, with its clear distinctions, will be at the bottom of the Red Sea,' said the Duke of St. Angelo, 'and then no one will sit when His Majesty rises.'

'Amen!' said Waldershare. 'All diplomacy since the Treaty of Utrecht seems to me to be fiddle-faddle, and the country rewarded the great man who made that treaty by an attainder.'

Endymion returned to town towards the end of September, Waldershare went to Paris, and Lord Beaumaris and the prince, who had become intimate, repaired together to Conington, the seat of Lord Beaumaris, to kill pheasants. Even the Rodneys, who had gone to the Rhine this year, had not returned. Endymion had only the society of his fellow clerks. He liked Trenchard, who was acute, full of official information, and of gentle breeding. Still it must be confessed that Endymion felt the change in his society. Seymour Hicks was hardly a fit successor to

Waldershare, and Jawett's rabid abstractions on government were certainly not so interesting as *la haute politique* of the Duke of St. Angelo. Were it not for the letters which he constantly received from his sister, he would have felt a little despondent. As it was, he renewed his studies in his pleasant garret, trained himself in his French and German, and got up several questions for the Union.

The month seemed very long, but it was not unprofitably spent. The Rodneys were still absent. They had not returned as they had intended direct to England, but had gone to Paris to meet Mr. Waldershare.

At the end of October there was a semi-official paragraph announcing the approaching meeting of the Cabinet, and the movements of its members. Some were in the north, and some were in the south; some were killing the last grouse, and some, placed in green ridings, were blazing in battues. But all were to be at their post in ten days, and there was a special notification that intelligence had been received of the arrival of Lord and Lady Roehampton at Gibraltar.

CHAPTER XI.

Lady Roehampton, in her stately mansion in St. James' Square, found life very different from what she had experienced in her Andalusian dream. For three months she had been the constant companion of one of the most fascinating of men, whose only object had been to charm and delight her. And in this he had entirely succeeded. From the moment they arrived in London, however, they seemed to be separated, and although when they met, there was ever a sweet smile and a kind and playful word for her, his brow, if not oppressed with care, was always weighty with thought. Lord Roehampton was little at his office; he worked in a spacious chamber on the ground floor of his private residence, and which was called the Library, though its literature consisted only of Hansard, volumes

of state papers, shelves of treatises, and interminable folios of parliamentary reports. He had not been at home a week before the floor of the apartment was literally covered with red boxes, all containing documents requiring attention, and which messengers were perpetually bringing or carrying away. Then there were long meetings of the Cabinet almost daily, and daily visits from ambassadors and foreign ministers, which prevented the transaction of the current business, and rendered it necessary that Lord Roehampton should sit up late in his cabinet, and work sometimes nearly till the hours of dawn. There had been of course too some arrears of business, for secretaries of state cannot indulge with impunity in Andalusian dreams, but Lord Roehampton was well served. His under-secretaries of state were capable and experienced men, and their chief had not been altogether idle in his wanderings. He had visited Paris, and the capital of France in those days was the capital of diplomacy. The visit of Lord Roehampton had settled some questions which might have lingered for years,

and had given him that opportunity of personal survey which to a statesman is invaluable.

Although it was not the season, the great desert had, comparatively speaking, again become peopled. There were many persons in town, and they all called immediately on Lady Roehampton. The ministerial families and the diplomatic corps alone form a circle, but there is also a certain number of charming people who love London in November, and lead there a wondrous pleasant life of real amusement, until their feudal traditions and their domestic duties summon them back to their Christmas homes.

Lord and Lady Roehampton gave constant dinners, and after they had tried two or three, he expressed his wish to his wife that she should hold a small reception after these dinners. He was a man of great tact, and he wished to launch his wife quietly and safely on the social ocean. 'There is nothing like practising before Christmas, my love,' he would say; 'you will get your hand in, and be able to hold regular receptions in the spring.' And he was quite right. The din-

ners became the mode, and the assemblies were eagerly appreciated. The Secretary of the Treasury whispered to an Under-Secretary of State,—'This marriage was a *coup*. We have got another house.'

Myra had been a little anxious about the relations between Lord Roehampton and her brother. She felt, with a woman's instinct, that her husband might not be overpleased by her devotion to Endymion, and she could not resist the conviction that the disparity of age which is easily forgotten in a wife, and especially in a wife who adores you, assumes a different, and somewhat distasteful character, when a great statesman is obliged to recognise it in the shape of a boyish brother-in-law. But all went right, for the sweetness of Lord Roehampton's temper was inexhaustible. Endymion had paid several visits to St. James' Square before Myra could seize the opportunity, for which she was ever watching, to make her husband and her brother acquainted.

'And so you are one of us,' said Lord Roehampton, with his sweetest smile and in

his most musical tone, 'and in office. We must try to give you a lift.' And then he asked Endymion who was his chief, and how he liked him, and then he said, 'A good deal depends on a man's chief. I was under your grandfather when I first entered parliament, and I never knew a pleasanter man to do business with. He never made difficulties; he always encouraged one. A younker likes that.'

Lady Roehampton was desirous of paying some attention to all those who had been kind to her brother; particularly Mr Waldershare and Lord Beaumaris—and she wished to invite them to her house. 'I am sure Waldershare would like to come,' said Endymion, 'but Lord Beaumaris, I know, never goes anywhere, and I have myself heard him say he never would.'

'Yes, my lord was telling me Lord Beaumaris was quite *farouche*, and it is feared that we may lose him. That would be sad,' said Myra, 'for he is powerful.'

'I should like very much if you could give me a card for Mr. Trenchard,' said En-

dymion; 'he is not in society, but he is quite a gentleman.'

'You shall have it, my dear. I have always liked Mr. Trenchard, and I dare say, some day or other, he may be of use to you.'

The Neuchatels were not in town, but Myra saw them frequently, and Mr. Neuchatel often dined in St. James' Square—but the ladies always declined every invitation of the kind. They came up from Hainault to see Myra, but looked as if nothing but their great affection would prompt such a sacrifice, and seemed always pining for Arcadia. Endymion, however, not unfrequently continued his Sunday visits to Hainault, to which Mr. Neuchatel had given him a general welcome. This young gentleman, indeed, soon experienced a considerable change in his social position. Invitations flocked to him, and often from persons whom he did not know, and who did not even know him. He went by the name of Lady Roehampton's brother, and that was a sufficient passport.

'We are trying to get up a carpet dance

to-night,' said Belinda to a fair friend. 'What men are in town?'

'Well, there is Mr. Waldershare, who has just left me.'

'I have asked him.'

'Then there is Lord Willesden and Henry Grantley—I know they are passing through town—and there is the new man, Lady Roehampton's brother.'

'I will send to Lord Willesden and Henry Grantley immediately, and perhaps you will send a card, which I will write here, for me to the new man.'

And in this way Mr. Ferrars soon found that he was what is called 'everywhere.'

One of the most interesting acquaintances that Lady Roehampton made was a colleague of her husband, and that was Mr. Sidney Wilton, once the intimate friend of her father. He had known herself and her brother when they were children, indeed from the cradle. Mr. Sidney Wilton was in the perfection of middle life, and looked young for his years. He was tall and pensive, and naturally sentimental, though a long political career, for he

had entered the House of Commons for the family borough the instant he was of age, had brought to this susceptibility a salutary hardness. Although somewhat alienated from the friend of his youth by the course of affairs, for Mr. Sidney Wilton had followed Lord Roehampton, while Mr. Ferrars had adhered to the Duke of Wellington, he had not neglected Ferrars in his fall, but his offers of assistance, frankly and generously made, had been coldly though courteously rejected, and no encouragement had been given to the maintenance of their once intimate acquaintance.

Mr. Sidney Wilton was much struck by the appearance of Lady Roehampton. He tried to compare the fulfilment of her promise with the beautiful and haughty child whom he used to wonder her parents so extravagantly spoiled. Her stature was above the average height of women and finely developed and proportioned. But it was in the countenance—in the pellucid and commanding brow, the deep splendour of her dark blue eyes softened by long lashes, her short

upper lip, and the rich profusion of her dark chestnut hair—that his roused memory recalled the past; and he fell into a mood of agitated contemplation.

The opportunities which he enjoyed of cultivating her society were numerous, and Mr. Wilton missed none. He was frequently her guest, and being himself the master of a splendid establishment, he could offer her a hospitality which everyone appreciated. Lord Roehampton was peculiarly his political chief, and they had always been socially intimate. As the trusted colleague of her husband—as one who had known her in her childhood, and as himself a man singularly qualified, by his agreeable conversation and tender and deferential manner, to make his way with women—Mr. Sidney Wilton had no great difficulty, particularly in that happy demi-season which precedes Christmas, in establishing relations of confidence and intimacy with Lady Roehampton.

The cabinets were over: the government had decided on their measures, and put them in a state of preparation, and they were about

to disperse for a month. The seat of Lord Roehampton was in the extreme north of England, and a visit to it was inconvenient at this moment, and especially at this season. The department of Lord Roehampton was very active at this time, and he was unwilling that the first impression by his wife of her future home should be experienced at a season little favourable to the charms of a northern seat. Mr. Sidney Wilton was the proprietor of the most beautiful and the most celebrated villa in England; only twenty miles from town, seated on a wooded crest of the swan-crowned Thames, with gardens of delight, and woods full of pheasants, and a terrace that would have become a court, glancing over a wide expanse of bower and glade, studded with bright halls and delicate steeples, and the smoke of rural homes.

It was arranged that Lord and Lady Roehampton should pass their Christmas at Gaydene with Mr. Sidney Wilton, stay as long as they liked, go where they chose, but make it their head-quarters. It was a most successful visit; for a great deal of business

was done, as well as pleasure enjoyed. The ambassadors, who are always a little uneasy at Christmas when everybody is away, and themselves without country homes, were all invited down for that week. Lord Roehampton used to give them audiences after the shooting parties. He thought it was a specific against their being too long. He used to say, 'The first dinner-bell often brings things to a point.' After Christmas there was an ever-varying stream of company, chiefly official and parliamentary. The banquet and the battue did not always settle the business, the clause, or the schedule, which the guests often came down to Gaydene ostensibly to accomplish, but they sent men back to town with increased energy and good humour, and kept the party in heart. Towards the end of the month the premier came down, and for him the Blue Ribbon Covert had been reserved, though he really cared little for sport. It was an eighteenth century tradition that knights of the garter only had been permitted to shoot this choice preserve, but Mr. Sidney Wilton, in this advanced age, did not of

course revive such an ultra-exclusive practice, and he was particular in arranging the party to include Mr. Jorrocks. This was a Radical member to whom considerable office had been given at the reconstruction of 1835, when it was necessary that the Whigs should conciliate the Mountain. He was a pretentious, underbred, half-educated man, fluent with all the common-places of middle-class ambition, which are humorously called democratic opinions, but at heart a sycophant of the aristocracy. He represented, however, a large and important constituency, and his promotion was at first looked upon as a masterpiece of management. The Mountain, who knew Jorrocks by heart, and felt that they had in their ranks men in every sense his superior, and that he could be no representative of their intelligence and opinions, and so by degrees prepare for their gradual admission to the sacred land, at first sulked over the promotion of their late companion, and only did not publicly deride it from the feeling that by so doing they might be playing the game of the ministry. At the time of which we are

writing, having become extremely discontented and wishing to annoy the government, they even affected dissatisfaction at the subordinate position which Jorrocks occupied in the administration, and it was generally said —had become indeed the slang of the party— that the test of the sincerity of the ministry to Liberal principles was to put Jorrocks in the cabinet. The countenance of the premier when this choice programme was first communicated to him was what might have been expected had he learnt of the sudden descent upon this isle of an invading force, and the Secretary of the Treasury whispered in confidence to one or two leaders of the Mountain, 'that if they did not take care, they would upset the government.'

'That is exactly what we want to do,' was the reply.

So it will be seen that the position of the ministry, previous to the meeting of parliament in 1839, was somewhat critical. In the meantime, its various members, who knew their man, lavished every practicable social attention on Jorrocks. The dinners they

gave him were doubled; they got their women to call on his women; and Sidney Wilton, a member of an illustrious garter family, capped the climax by appointing him one of the party to shoot the Blue Ribbon Covert.

Mr. Wilton had invited Endymion to Gaydene, and, as his stay there could only be brief, had even invited him to repeat the visit. He was, indeed, unaffectedly kind to one whom he remembered so young, and was evidently pleased with him.

One evening, a day or two before the break-up of the party, while some charming Misses Playfellow, with an impudent brother, who all lived in the neighbourhood, were acting charades, Mr. Wilton said to Lady Roehampton, by whose side he was sitting in the circle—

'I have had a very busy morning about my office. There is to be a complete revolution in it. The whole system is to be reconstructed; half the present people are to be pensioned off, and new blood is to be introduced. It struck me that this might be an

opening for your brother. He is in the public service—that is something ; and as there are to be so many new men, there will be no jealousy as to his promotion. If you will speak to him about it, and he likes it, I will appoint him one of the new clerks ; and then, if he also likes it, he shall be my private secretary. That will give him position, and be no mean addition to his income, you know, if we last—but that depends, I suppose, on Mr. Jorrocks.'

Lady Roehampton communicated all this to her brother on her return to London. 'It is exactly what I wished,' she said. 'I wanted you to be private secretary to a cabinet minister, and if I were to chose anyone, except, of course, my lord, it would be Mr. Wilton. He is a perfect gentleman, and was dear papa's friend. I understand you will have three hundred a year to begin with, and the same amount as his secretary. You ought to be able to live with ease and propriety on six hundred a year—and this reminds me of what I have been thinking of before we went to Gaydene. I think now you ought to have a

more becoming residence. The Rodneys are good people, I do not doubt, and I dare say we shall have an opportunity of proving our sense of their services; but they are not exactly the people that I care for you to live with, and, at any rate, you cannot reside any longer in a garret. I have taken some chambers in the Albany, therefore, for you, and they shall be my contribution to your housekeeping. They are not badly furnished, but they belonged to an old general officer, and are not very new-fashioned; but we will go together and see them to-morrow, and I dare say I shall soon be able to make them *comme il faut.*'

CHAPTER XII.

This considerable rise in the life of Endymion, after the first excitement occasioned by its announcement to him had somewhat subsided, was not contemplated by him with unmixed feelings of satisfaction. It seemed to terminate many relations of life, the value of which he had always appreciated, but which now, with their impending conclusion, he felt, and felt keenly, had absolutely contributed to his happiness. There was no great pang in quitting his fellow-clerks, except Trenchard, whom he greatly esteemed. But poor little Warwick Street had been to him a real home, if unvarying kindness, and sedulous attention, and the affection of the eyes and heart, as well as of the mouth, can make a hearth. He hoped he might preserve the friendship of Waldershare, which their joint intimacy with the prince

would favour ; but still he could hardly flatter himself that the delightful familiarity of their past lives could subsist. Endymion sighed, and then he sighed again. He felt sad. Because he was leaving the humble harbour of refuge, the entrance to which, even in the darkest hour of his fallen fortunes, was thought somewhat of an indignity, and was about to assume a position which would not have altogether misbecome the earliest expectations of his life? That seems unreasonable ; but mankind, fortunately, are not always governed by reason, but by sentiment, and often by very tender sentiment.

When Endymion, sitting in his little room, analysed his feelings, he came to the conclusion that his sadness was occasioned by his having to part from Imogene. It often requires an event in life, and an unexpected one, to make us clearly aware of the existence of feelings which have long influenced us. Never having been in a position in which the possibility of uniting his fate to another could cross his mind for a moment, he had been content with the good fortune which permitted a large por-

tion of his life to be passed in the society of a woman who, unconsciously both to him and to herself, had fascinated him. The graceful child who, four or five years ago, had first lit him to his garret, without losing anything of her rare and simple ingenuousness, had developed into a beautiful and accomplished woman. There was a strong resemblance between Imogene and her sister, but Imogene was a brunette. Her countenance indicated far more intellect and character than that of Sylvia. Her brow was delicately pencilled and finely arched, and her large dark eyes gleamed with a softness and sweetness of expression, which were irresistibly attractive, and seemed to indicate sympathy with everything that was good and beautiful. Her features were not so regular as her sister's ; but when she smiled,her face was captivating.

Endymion had often listened, half with fondness and half with scepticism, to Waldershare dilating, according to his wont, on the high character and qualities of Imogene, whom he persisted in believing he was preparing for a great career. 'How it will come about I

cannot say,' he would remark; 'but it will come. If my legitimate sovereign were on the throne, and I in the possession of my estates, which were graciously presented by the usurper to the sausage-makers, or some other choice middle-class corporation, I would marry her myself. But that is impossible. That would only be asking her to share my ruin. I want her to live in palaces, and perhaps, in my decline of life, make me her librarian, like Casanova. I should be content to dine in her hall every day beneath the salt, and see her enter with her state, amid the flourish of trumpets.' And now, strange to say, Endymion was speculating on the fate of Imogene, and, as he thought, in a more practical spirit. Six hundred a year, he thought, was not a very large income; but it was an income, and one which a year ago he never contemplated possessing until getting grey in the public service. Why not realise perfect happiness at once? He could conceive no bliss greater than living with Imogene in one of those little villas, even if semi-detached, which now are numbered by tens of thousands, and which were then be-

ginning to shoot out their suburban antennæ in every direction of our huge metropolis. He saw her in his mind's eye in a garden of perpetual sunshine, breathing of mignonette and bright with roses, and waiting for him as he came down from town and his daily labours, in the cheap and convenient omnibus. What a delightful companion to welcome him! How much to tell her, and how much to listen to! And then their evenings with a delicious book or some delightful music! What holidays, too, of romantic adventure! The vine-clad Rhine, perhaps Switzerland; at any rate, the quaint old cities of Flanders, and the winding valley of the Meuse. They could live extremely well on six hundred a year; yes, with all the real refinements of existence. And all this genuine happiness was to be sacrificed for utterly fantastic and imaginary gratifications, which, if analysed, would be found only to be efforts to amuse and astonish others.

It did not yet occur to Endymion that his garden could not always be sunshiny; that cares crop up in villas, even semi-detached, as

well as joys; that he would have children, and perhaps too many; that they would be sick, and that doctors' bills would soon put a stop to romantic excursions; that his wife would become exhausted with nursing and clothing and teaching them; that she herself would become an invalid, and moped to death; that his resources would every day bear a less proportion to his expenditure; and that wanting money, he would return too often from town a harassed husband to a jaded wife!

Mr. Rodney and Sylvia were at Conington on a visit to Lord Beaumaris, hunting. It was astonishing how Sylvia had ridden to the hounds, mounted on the choicest steeds, and in a scarlet habit which had been presented to her by Mr. Vigo. She had created quite an enthusiasm in the field, and Lord Beaumaris was proud of his guests. When Endymion parted with his sister at the Albany, where they had been examining his rooms, he had repaired to Warwick Street, with some expectation that the Rodneys would have returned from Conington, and he intended to break to his host the impending change in his

life. The Rodneys, however, had not arrived, and so he ascended to his room, where he had been employed in arranging his books and papers, and in indulging in the reverie which we have indicated. When he came downstairs, wishing to inquire about the probable arrival of his landlord, Endymion knocked at the door of the parlour where they used to assemble, and on entering, found Imogene writing.

'How do you do, Mr. Ferrars?' she said, rising. 'I am writing to Sylvia. They are not returning as soon as they intended, and I am to go down to Conington by an early train to-morrow.'

'I wanted to see Mr. Rodney,' said Endymion moodily.

'Can I write anything to him, or tell him anything?' said Imogene.

'No,' continued Endymion, in a melancholy tone. 'I can tell you what I wanted to say. But you must be occupied now, going away, and unexpectedly, to-morrow. It seems to me that everyone is going away.'

'Well, we have lost the prince, certainly,'

said Imogene, 'and I doubt whether his rooms will be ever let again.'

'Indeed!' said Endymion.

'Well, I only know what Mr. Waldershare tells me. He says that Mr. Rodney and Mr. Vigo have made a great speculation, and gained a great deal of money; but Mr. Rodney never speaks to me of such matters, nor indeed does Sylvia. I am myself very sorry that the prince has gone, for he interested me much.'

'Well, I should think Mr. Rodney would not be very sorry to get rid of me then,' said Endymion.

'Oh! Mr. Ferrars, why should you say or think such things? I am sure that my brother and sister, and indeed everyone in this house, always consider your comfort and welfare before any other object.'

'Yes,' said Endymion, 'you have all been most kind to me, and that makes me more wretched at the prospect of leaving you.'

'But there is no prospect of that?'

'A certainty, Imogene; there is going to

be a change in my life,' and then he told her all.

'Well,' said Imogene, 'it would be selfish not to be happy at what I hear; but though I hope I am happy, I need not be joyful. I never used to be nervous, but I am afraid I am getting so. All these great changes rather shake me. This adventure of the prince—as Mr. Waldershare says, it is history. Then Miss Myra's great marriage, and your promotion—although they are exactly what we used to dream about, and wished a fairy would accomplish, and somehow felt that, somehow or other, they must happen—yet now they have occurred, one is almost as astounded as delighted. We certainly have been very happy in Warwick Street, at least I have been, all living as it were together. But where shall we be this time next year? All scattered, and perhaps not even the Rodneys under this roof. I know not how it is, but I dread leaving the roof where one has been happy.'

'Oh! you know you must leave it one day or other, Imogene. You are sure to marry; that you cannot avoid.'

'Well, I am not by any means sure about that,' said Imogene. 'Mr. Waldershare, in educating me, as he says, as a princess, has made me really neither fish, flesh, nor fowl, nor even that coarser but popular delicacy never forgotten. I could not unite my life with a being who was not refined in mind and in manners, and the men of my class in life, who are the only ones after all who might care to marry me, shock my taste. I am ashamed to say so. I am not sure it is not wicked to think it even; but so it is.'

'Why do you not marry Waldershare?' said Endymion.

'That would be madness! I do not know any alliance that could prove more unfortunate. Mr. Waldershare must never marry. All people of imagination, they say, are difficult to live with; but a person who consists solely of imagination, like Mr. Waldershare, who has indeed no other attribute—before a year was past, married, he would fly to the desert or to La Trappe, commit terrible scandals from mere weariness of feeling, write pasquinades against the wife of his bosom, and hold us

both up to the fierce laughter of the world. No, no; he is the best, the dearest, and the most romantic of friends; tender as a father, and sometimes as wise, for genius can be everything. He is going to rise early to-morrow, which he particularly dislikes, because he will not let me go to the station alone; though I tell him, as I often tell him, those are the becoming manners of my class.'

'But you might meet a person of the refinement you require,' said Endymion, 'with a moderate and yet a sufficient income, who would not be unworthy of you.'

'I doubt it,' said Imogene.

'But, do not doubt it, dear Imogene,' said Endymion, advancing; 'such charms as yours, both of body and of mind, such a companion in life, so refined, so accomplished, and yet endowed with such clear sense, and such a sweet disposition—believe me——'

But at this moment a splendid equipage drove up to the door, with powdered footmen and long canes behind, and then a terrible rap, like the tattoo of a field-marshal.

'Good gracious! what is all this?' exclaimed Imogene.

'It is my sister,' said Endymion, blushing; 'it is Lady Roehampton.'

'I must go to her myself,' said Imogene; 'I cannot have the servant attend upon your sister.'

Endymion remained silent and confused. Imogene was some little time at the carriage-door, for Lady Roehampton had inquiries to make after Sylvia and other courteous things to say, and then Imogene returned, and said to Endymion, 'Lady Roehampton wishes you to go with her directly on some particular business.'

CHAPTER XIII.

Endymion liked his new official life very much. Whitehall was a great improvement on Somerset House, and he had sufficient experience of the civil service to duly appreciate the advantage of being permanently quartered in one of the chief departments of the state, instead of obscurely labouring in a subordinate office, with a limited future, and detached from all the keenly interesting details of public life. But it was not this permanent and substantial advantage which occasioned him such lively and such novel pleasure as the fact of his being a private secretary, and a private secretary to a cabinet minister.

The relations between a minister and his secretary are, or at least should be, among the finest that can subsist between two individuals. Except the married state, there is none

in which so great a degree of confidence is involved, in which more forbearance ought to be exercised, or more sympathy ought to exist. There is usually in the relation an identity of interest, and that of the highest kind; and the perpetual difficulties, the alternations of triumph and defeat, develope devotion. A youthful secretary will naturally feel some degree of enthusiasm for his chief, and a wise minister will never stint his regard for one in whose intelligence and honour he finds he can place confidence.

There never was a happier prospect of these relations being established on the most satisfactory basis than in the instance of Endymion and his new master. Mr. Sidney Wilton was a man of noble disposition, fine manners, considerable culture, and was generally gracious. But he was disposed to be more than gracious to Endymion, and when he found that our young friend had a capacity for work—that his perception was quick and clear—that he wrote with facility—never made difficulties—was calm, sedulous, and patient, the interest which Mr. Wilton took

in him as the son of William Ferrars, and, we must add, as the brother of Lady Roehampton, became absorbed in the personal regard which the minister soon entertained for his secretary. Mr. Wilton found a pleasure in forming the mind of Endymion to the consideration and comprehension of public affairs; he spoke to him both of men and things without reserve; revealed to him the characters of leading personages on both sides, illustrated their antecedents, and threw light upon their future; taught him the real condition of parties in parliament, rarely to be found in newspapers; and finally, when he was sufficiently initiated, obtained for his secretary a key for his cabinet boxes, which left little of the business of government unknown to Endymion.

Such great confidence, and that exhibited by one who possessed so many winning qualities, excited in the breast of Endymion the most lively feelings of gratitude and regard. He tried to prove them by the vigilant and unwearying labour with which he served his master, and he served him every day more

effectually, because every day he became more intimate with the mind and method of Mr. Wilton. Everyone to a certain degree is a mannerist; everyone has his ways; and a secretary will be assisted in the transaction of business if a vigilant observation has made him acquainted with the idiosyncrasy of his chief.

The regulations of the office which authorise a clerk, appointed to a private secretaryship, to deviate from the routine duties of the department, and devote his time entirely to the special requirements of his master, of course much assisted Endymion, and proved also a pleasant relief, for he had had enough at Somerset House of copying documents and drawing up formal reports. But it was not only at Whitehall that he saw Mr. Wilton, and experienced his kindness. Endymion was a frequent guest under Mr. Wilton's roof, and Mr. Wilton's establishment was one of the most distinguished in London. They met also much in the evenings, and always at Lady Roehampton's, where Mr. Wilton was never absent. Whenever and wherever they

met, even if they had been working together the whole morning, Mr. Wilton always greeted Endymion with the utmost consideration—because he knew such a recognition would raise Endymion in the eyes of the social herd, who always observe little things, and generally form from them their opinions of great affairs.

CHAPTER XIV.

Mr. Wilton was at Charing Cross, on his way to his office, when a lady saluted him from her carriage, which then drew up to the pavement and stopped.

'We have just arrived,' said Lady Montfort, 'and I want you to give me a little dinner to-day. My lord is going to dine with an Old Bailey lawyer, who amuses him, and I do not like to be left, the first day, on the *pavé*.'

'I can give you a rather large dinner, if you care to come,' said Mr. Wilton, 'but I fear you will not like it. I have got some House of Commons men dining with me to-day, and one or two of the other house to meet them. My sister Georgina has very good-naturedly promised to come, with her husband, and I have just written a note to

the Duchess Dowager of Keswick, who often helps me—but I fear this sort of thing would hardly suit you.'

'On the contrary, I think it will be very amusing. Only do not put me between two of your colleagues. Anybody amuses me for once. A new acquaintance is like a new book. I prefer it, even if bad, to a classic.'

The dinner party to-day at Mr. Wilton's was miscellaneous, and not heterogeneous enough to produce constraint, only to produce a little excitement—some commoners high in office, and the Treasury whip, several manufacturers who stood together in the room, and some metropolitan members. Georgina's husband, who was a lord in waiting, and a great swell, in a green riband, moved about with adroit condescension, and was bewitchingly affable. The manufacturing members whispered to each other that it was a wise thing to bring the two houses together, but when Her Grace the Duchess Dowager of Keswick was announced, they exchanged glances of astounded satisfaction, and felt

that the government, which had been thought to be in a somewhat rickety condition, would certainly stand.

Berengaria came a little late, not very. She thought it had been earlier, but it was not. The duchess dowager opened her eyes with wonderment when she beheld Lady Montfort, but the company in general were not in the least aware of the vast social event that was occurring. They were gratified in seeing another fine lady, but did not, of course, rank her with a duchess.

The dinner went off better than Mr. Wilton could have hoped, as it was impossible to place a stranger by Lady Montfort. He sate in the middle of his table with the duchess dowager on his right and Berengaria, who was taken out by the green riband, on the other. As he knew the green riband would be soon exhausted, he devoted himself to Lady Montfort, and left the duchess to her own resources, which were considerable, and she was soon laying down her opinions on men and things to her other neighbours with much effect. The manufacturers talked shop to each other

in whispers, that is to say, mixed House of Commons tattle about bills and committees with news from Manchester and Liverpool, and the West Riding. The metropolitan members, then a more cosmopolitan body and highly miscellaneous in their character and pursuits, were louder, and perhaps more easy, even ventured to talk across the table when near its end, and enticed the peers into discussions on foreign politics.

Mr. Sidney Wilton having been delightful, thought it necessary to observe that he feared Lady Montfort had been bored. 'I have been, and am, extremely amused,' she replied; 'and now tell me, who is that young man at the very end of the table?'

'That is my private secretary, Mr. Ferrars.'

'Ferrars!'

'A brother of Lady Roehampton.'

'Present him to me after dinner.'

Endymion knew Lady Montfort by sight, though she did not know him. He had seen her more than once at the receptions of Mrs. Neuchatel, where, as indeed in every place, she was the cynosure. He was much astonished

at meeting her at this party to-day,—almost as surprised as the duchess dowager, for Endymion, who was of an observant nature, was beginning to comprehend society and all its numerous elements, and schools, and shades, and classes. When they entered the saloon, Mr. Wilton led Endymion up to Lady Montfort at once, and she immediately inquired after his sister. 'Do you think,' she said, 'Lady Roehampton would see me to-morrow if I called on her?'

'If I were Lady Roehampton, I would,' said Endymion.

Lady Montfort looked at him with a glance of curious scrutiny; not smiling, and yet not displeased. 'I will write her a little note in the morning,' said Lady Montfort thoughtfully. 'One may leave cards for ever. Mr. Wilton tells me you are quite his right hand.'

'Mr. Wilton is too kind to me,' said Endymion. 'One could not be excused for not doing one's best for such a master.'

'You like people to be kind to you?' said Lady Montfort.

'Well, I have not met with so much kind-

ness in this world as to have become insensible to it.'

'You are too young to be melancholy,' said Lady Montfort; 'are you older than Lady Roehampton?'

'We are twins.'

'Twins! and wonderfully like too! Is it not thought so?'

'I have sometimes heard it mentioned.'

'Oh, it is striking!' said Lady Montfort, and she motioned to him to sit down by her; and then she began to talk politics, and asked him what the members thought at dinner of the prospects of the government, and what he had heard of the malcontent movement that they said was *in petto*. Endymion replied that Mr. Sharpset, the Secretary of the Treasury, did not think much of it.

'Well, I wish I did not,' said Lady Montfort. 'However, I will soon find out something about it. I have only just come to town; but I intend to open my house immediately. Now I must go. What are you going to do with yourself to-morrow? I wish you would come and dine with Lord Montfort. It will be

quite without form, a few agreeable and amusing people; Lord Montfort must be amused. It seems a reasonable fancy, but very difficult to realise; and now you shall ask for my carriage, and to-morrow I hope to be able to tell Lady Roehampton what very great pleasure I have had in making the acquaintance of her brother.'

CHAPTER XV.

THE morning after, Endymion was emerging from the court-yard of the Albany, in order to call on Mr. Rodney, who, as he learnt from a casual remark in a letter from Waldershare, would be in town. The ladies were left behind for the last week of hunting, but business called Mr. Rodney home. Waldershare wrote to Endymion in the highest spirits, and more than once declared that he was the happiest of men. Just as Endymion had entered Piccadilly, he was stopped by a once familiar face; it was St. Barbe, who accosted him with great warmth, and as usual began to talk about himself 'You are surprised to see me,' he said. 'It is two years since we met. Well, I have done wonders; carried all before me. By Jove, sir, I can walk into a minister's private room with as much ease as if I were

entering the old den. The ambassadors are hand and glove with me. There are very few things I do not know. I have made the fortune of the "Chuck-Farthing," trebled its circulation, and invented a new style, which has put me at the head of all "our own correspondents." I wish you were at Paris; I would give you a dinner at the Rocher, which would make up for all our dinners at that ferocious ruffian, Joe's. I gave a dinner the other day to forty of them, all "our own correspondents," or such like. Do you know, my dear fellow, when I looked round the room, there was not a man who had not done his best to crush me; running down my works or not noticing them, or continually dilating on Gushy, as if the English public would never read anything else. Now, that was Christian-like of me, was not it? God, sir, if they only had but one neck, and I had been the Emperor Nero—but, I will not dwell on it; I hate them. However, it suits me to take the other line at present. I am all for fraternity and that sort of thing, and give them dinners. There is a reason why, but there is no time to talk

about that now. I shall want their sweet voices—the hounds! But, my dear fellow, I am truly glad to see you. Do you know, I always liked you; and how come you to be in this quarter this fine morning?'

'I live in the Albany,' said Endymion.

'You live in the Albany!' repeated St. Barbe, with an amazed and perturbed expression. 'I knew I could not be a knight of the garter, or a member of White's—the only two things an Englishman cannot command; but I did think I might some day live in the Albany. It was my dream. And you live there! Gracious! what an unfortunate fellow I am! I do not see how you can live in the Albany with your salary; I suppose they have raised you.'

'I have left Somerset House,' said Endymion, 'and am now at the Board of Trade, and am private secretary to Mr. Sidney Wilton.'

'Oh!' said St. Barbe; 'then we have friends at court. You may do something for me, if I only knew what I wanted. They have no decorations here. Curse this aristocratic country, they want all the honours to

themselves. I should like to be in the Board of Trade, and would make some sacrifice for it. The proprietors of the "Chuck-Farthing" pay well; they pay like gentlemen; though, why I say so I do not exactly know, for no gentleman ever paid me anything. But, if I could be Secretary of the Board of Trade, or get 1500*l.* a year secure, I would take it; and I dare say I could get employed on some treaties, as I speak French, and then I might get knighted.'

'Well, I think you are very well off,' said Endymion; 'carrying, as you say, everything before you. What more can you want?'

'I hate the craft,' said St. Barbe, with an expression of genuine detestation; 'I should like to show them all up before I died. I suppose it was your sister marrying a lord that got you on in this way. I could have married a countess myself, but then, to be sure, she was only a Polish one, and hard up. I never had a sister; I never had any luck in life at all. I wish I had been a woman. Women are the only people who get on. A man works all his life, and thinks he has done a wonderful

thing if, with one leg in the grave and no hair on his head, he manages to get a coronet; and a woman dances at a ball with some young fellow or other, or sits next to some old fellow at dinner and pretends she thinks him charming, and he makes her a peeress on the spot. Oh! it is a disgusting world; it must end in revolution. Now you tell your master, Mr. Sidney Wilton, that if he wants to strengthen the institutions of this country, the government should establish an order of merit, and the press ought to be represented in it. I do not speak only for myself; I speak for my brethren. Yes, sir, I am not ashamed of my order.'

And so they bade each other farewell.

'Unchanged,' thought Endymion, as he crossed Piccadilly; 'the vainest, the most envious, and the most amusing of men! I wonder what he will do in life.'

Mr. Rodney was at home, had just finished his breakfast, read his newspaper, and was about to 'go into the City.' His costume was perfect. Mr. Rodney's hat seemed always a new one. Endymion was a little embarrassed

by this interview, for he had naturally a kind heart, and being young, it was still soft. The Rodneys had been truly good to him, and he was attached to them. Imogene had prepared Mr. Rodney for the change in Endymion's life, and Endymion himself had every reason to believe that in a worldly point of view the matter was entirely insignificant to his old landlord. Still his visit this morning ratified a permanent separation from those with whom he had lived for a long time, and under circumstances of sympathy and family connection which were touching. He retained Mr. Rodney's hand for a moment as he expressed, and almost in faltering tones, his sorrow at their separation and his hope that their friendly connection might be always cherished.

'That feeling is reciprocal,' said Mr. Rodney. 'If only because you were the son of my revered and right honourable friend, you would always be esteemed here. But you are esteemed, or, I may say beloved, for your own sake. We shall be proud to be considered with kindness by you, and I echo

your wish that, though no longer living under the same roof, we may yet, and even often, meet. But do not say another word about the inconvenience you are occasioning us. The truth is, that although wherever we went the son of my revered and right honourable friend would have always commanded hospitality from us, there are many changes about to take place in our family which have made us for some time contemplate leaving Warwick Street. Affairs, especially of late, have gone pretty well with me in the world,—at least not badly; I have had friends, and I hope have proved not undeserving of them. I wish Sylvia, too, to live in an airier situation, near the park, so that she may ride every morning. Besides, I have a piece of news to communicate to you, which would materially affect our arrangements. We are going to lose Imogene.'

'Ah! she is going to be married,' said Endymion, blushing.

'She is going to be married,' said Mr. Rodney gravely.

'To Mr. Waldershare?' said Endymion.

'He almost said as much to me in a letter this morning. But I always thought so.'

'No; not to Mr. Waldershare,' said Mr. Rodney.

'Who is the happy man then?' said Endymion, agitated. 'I truly call him so; for I think myself that Imogene is perfection.'

'Imogene is about to be married to the Earl of Beaumaris."

CHAPTER XVI.

Simon, Earl of Montfort, with whom Endymion was so unexpectedly going to dine, may be said to have been a minor in his cradle. Under ordinary circumstances, his inheritance would have been one of the most considerable in England. His castle in the north was one of the glories of the land, and becomingly crowned his vast domain. Under the old parliamentary system, he had the greatest number of nomination boroughs possessed by any Whig noble. The character and conduct of an individual so qualified were naturally much speculated on and finely scanned. Nothing very decided transpired about them in his boyhood, but certainly nothing adverse. He was good-looking and athletic, and was said to be generous and good-natured, and when he went to Harrow, he became popular. In his

eighteenth year, while he was in correspondence with his guardians about going to Christchurch, he suddenly left his country without giving anyone notice of his intentions, and entered into, and fulfilled, a vast scheme of adventurous travel. He visited countries then rarely reached, and some of which were almost unknown. His flag had floated in the Indian Ocean, and he had penetrated the dazzling mysteries of Brazilian forests. When he was of age, he returned, and communicated with his guardians, as if nothing remarkable had happened in his life. Lord Montfort had inherited a celebrated stud, which the family had maintained for more than a century, and the sporting world remarked with satisfaction that their present representative appeared to take much interest in it. He had an establishment at Newmarket, and his horses were entered for all the great races of the kingdom. He appeared also at Melton, and conducted the campaign in a style becoming such a hero. His hunters and his cooks were both first-rate. Although he affected to take little interest in politics, the events of the time forced

him to consider them and to act. Lord Grey wanted to carry his Reform Bill, and the sacrifice of Lord Montfort's numerous boroughs was a necessary ingredient in the spell. He was appealed to as the head of one of the greatest Whig houses, and he was offered a dukedom. He relinquished his boroughs without hesitation, but he preferred to remain with one of the oldest earldoms of England for his chief title. All honours, however, clustered about him, though he never sought them, and in the same year he tumbled into the Lord Lieutenancy of his county, unexpectedly vacant, and became the youngest Knight of the Garter.

Society was looking forward with the keenest interest to the impending season, when Lord Montfort would formally enter its spell-bound ranks, and multiform were the speculations on his destiny. He attended an early levée, in order that he might be presented—a needful ceremony which had not yet taken place—and then again quitted his country, and for years. He was heard of in every capital except his own. Wonderful exploits

at St. Petersburg, and Paris, and Madrid, deeds of mark at Vienna, and eccentric adventures at Rome; but poor Melton, alas! expecting him to return every season, at last embalmed him, and his cooks, and his hunters, and his daring saddle, as a tradition,—jealous a little of Newmarket, whither, though absent, he was frequently transmitting foreign blood, and where his horses still ran, and were often victorious.

At last it would appear that the restless Lord Montfort had found his place, and that place was Paris. There he dwelt for years in Sybaritic seclusion. He built himself a palace, which he called a villa, and which was the most fanciful of structures, and full of every beautiful object which rare taste and boundless wealth could procure, from undoubted Raffaelles to jewelled toys. It was said that Lord Montfort saw no one; he certainly did not court or receive his own countrymen, and this perhaps gave rise to, or at least caused to be exaggerated, the tales that were rife of his profusion, and even his profligacy. But it was not true that he was entirely isolated. He lived much with the old families of France

in their haughty faubourg, and was highly considered by them. It was truly a circle for which he was adapted. Lord Montfort was the only living Englishman who gave one an idea of the nobleman of the eighteenth century. He was totally devoid of the sense of responsibility, and he looked what he resembled. His manner, though simple and natural, was finished and refined, and, free from forbidding reserve, was yet characterised by an air of serious grace.

With the exception of the memorable year when he sacrificed his nomination boroughs to the cause for which Hampden died on the field and Sidney on the scaffold—that is to say, the Whig government of England—Lord Montfort had been absent from his country for ten years, and one day, in his statued garden at the Belvedere, he asked himself what he had gained by it. There was no subject, divine or human, in which he took the slightest interest. He entertained for human nature generally, and without any exception, the most cynical appreciation. He had a sincere and profound conviction, that no man or

woman ever acted except from selfish and interested motives. Society was intolerable to him; that of his own sex and station wearisome beyond expression; their conversation consisted only of two subjects, horses and women, and he had long exhausted both. As for female society, if they were ladies, it was expected that, in some form or other, he should make love to them, and he had no sentiment. If he took refuge in the *demi-monde*, he encountered vulgarity, and that, to Lord Montfort, was insufferable. He had tried them in every capital, and vulgarity was the badge of all their tribe. He had attempted to read; a woman had told him to read French novels, but he found them only a clumsy representation of the life which, for years, he had practically been leading. An accident made him acquainted with Rabelais and Montaigne; and he had relished them, for he had a fine sense of humour. He might have pursued these studies, and perhaps have found in them a slight and occasional distraction, but a clever man he met at a guingette at Passy, whither he had gone to try to dissipate his weariness in

disguise, had convinced him, that if there were a worthy human pursuit, an assumption which was doubtful, it was that of science, as it impressed upon man his utter insignificance.

No one could say Lord Montfort was a bad-hearted man, for he had no heart. He was good-natured, provided it brought him no inconvenience; and as for temper, his was never disturbed, but this not from sweetness of disposition, rather from a contemptuous fine taste, which assured him, that a gentleman should never be deprived of tranquillity in a world where nothing was of the slightest consequence.

The result of these reflections was, that he was utterly wearied with Belvedere and Paris, and as his mind was now rather upon science, he fancied he should like to return to a country where it flourished, and where he indulged in plans of erecting colossal telescopes, and of promoting inquiry into the origin of things. He thought that with science and with fishing, the only sport to which he still really clung, for he liked the lulling influence of running streams, and a

pastime he could pursue in loneliness, existence might perhaps be endured.

Society was really surprised when they heard of the return of Lord Montfort to England. He came back in the autumn, so that there should be no season to encounter, and his flag was soon flying at his castle. There had been continuous attacks for years on the government for having made an absentee lord lieutenant of his county, and conferring the high distinction of the garter on so profligate a character. All this made his return more interesting and exciting.

A worthy nobleman of high rank and of the same county, who for the last five years everybody, shaking everybody's head, had been saying ought to have been lord lieutenant, had a great county function in his immediate neighbourhood in the late autumn, and had invited a large party to assist him in its celebration. It seemed right also to invite the lord lieutenant, but no one expected that he would make his appearance. On the contrary, the invitation was accepted, and the sensation was great. What would he be like,

and what would he do, and was he so very wicked as the county newspaper said? He came, this wicked man, with his graceful presence and his diamond star, and everybody's heart palpitated with a due mixture of terror and admiration. The only exception to these feelings was the daughter of the house, the Lady Berengaria. She was then in her second season, but still unparagoned, for she was a fastidious, not to say disdainful lady. The highest had been at her feet, and sued in vain. She was a stirring spirit, with great ambition and a daring will; never content except in society, and influencing it—for which she was qualified by her grace and lively fancy, her ready though capricious sympathy, and her passion for admiration.

The function was successful, and the county full of enthusiasm for their lord lieutenant, whose manner quite cleared his character. The party did not break up, in fact the function was only an excuse for the party. There was sport of all kinds, and in the evenings a carnival—for Lady Berengaria required everybody about her to be gay and

diverting—games and dances, and infinite frolic. Lord Montfort, who, to the surprise of everyone, did not depart, spoke to her a little, and perhaps would not have spoken at all, had they not met in the hunting-field. Lady Berengaria was a first-rate horsewoman, and really in the saddle looked irresistible.

The night before the party, which had lasted a week, broke up, Lord Montfort came and sat by Lady Berengaria. He spoke about the run of the morning, and she replied in the same vein. 'I have got a horse, Lady Berengaria, which I should like you to ride. Would you do so?'

'Certainly, and what sort of horse is it?'

'You shall see to-morrow. It is not far off. I like to have some horses always near,' and then he walked away.

It was a dark chestnut of matchless beauty. Lady Berengaria, who was of an emphatic nature, was loud in her admiration of its beauty and its hunting qualities.

'I agree with you,' said Lord Montfort, 'that it will spoil you for any other horse,

and therefore I shall ask permission to leave it here for your use.'

The party broke up, but, strange to say, Lord Montfort did not depart. It was a large family. Lady Berengaria had several sisters; her eldest brother was master of the hounds, and her younger brothers were asserting their rights as cadets, and killing their father's pheasants. There was also a number of cousins, who were about the same age, and were always laughing, though it was never quite clear what it was about. An affectation of gaiety may be sometimes detected in youth.

As Lord Montfort always had the duty of ushering the lady of the house to dinner, he never had the opportunity of conversing with Lady Berengaria, even had he wished it; but it was not at all clear that he did wish it, and it seemed that he talked as much to her sisters and the laughing cousins as to herself, but still he did not go away, which was most strange, and commenced to be embarrassing.

At last one evening, both her parents slumbering, one over the newspaper and the other over her work, and the rest of the party

in a distant room playing at some new game amid occasional peals of laughter, Lord Montfort, who had been sitting for some time by Lady Berengaria's side, and only asking now and then a question, though often a searching one, in order to secure her talking to him, rather abruptly said, 'I wonder if anything would ever induce you to marry me?'

This was the most startling social event of the generation. Society immediately set a-wondering how it would turn out, and proved very clearly that it must turn out badly. Men who knew Montfort well at Paris looked knowing, and said they would give it six months.

But the lady was as remarkable as a woman as the bridegroom was in his sex. Lady Berengaria was determined to be the Queen of Society, and had confidence in her unlimited influence over man. It is, however, rather difficult to work on the feelings of a man who has no heart. This she soon found out, and to her dismay, but she kept it a profound secret. By endless ingenuity on her part affairs went on very well much longer

than the world expected, and long enough to fulfil the object of Lady Berengaria's life. Lord Montfort launched his wife well, and seemed even content to be occasionally her companion until she had mounted the social throne. He was proud of her as he would be of one of his beautiful horses; but when all the world had acknowledged the influence of Berengaria, he fell into one of his old moods, and broke to her that he could bear it no longer, and that he must retire from society. Lady Montfort looked distressed, but, resolved under no circumstances to be separated from her husband, whom she greatly admired, and to whom, had he wished it, she could have become even passionately attached, signified her readiness to share his solitude. But she then found out that this was not what he wanted. It was not only retirement from society, but retirement from Lady Montfort, that was indispensable. In short, at no time of his perverse career had Lord Montfort been more wilful.

During the last years of his residence in Paris, when he was shut up in his delicious

Belvedere, he had complained much of the state of his health, and one of his principal pursuits was consulting the faculty on this interesting subject. The faculty were unanimous in their opinion that the disorder from which their patient was suffering was *Ennui*. This persistent opinion irritated him, and was one of the elements of his decision to leave the country. The unexpected distraction that followed his return to his native land had made him neglect or forget his sad indisposition, but it appears that it had now returned, and in an aggravated form. Unhappily the English physicians took much the same view of the case as their French brethren. They could find nothing organically wrong in the constitution or condition of Lord Montfort, and recommended occupation and society. At present he shrank with some disgust at the prospect of returning to France, and he had taken it into his head that the climate of Montfort did not agree with him. He was convinced that he must live in the south of England. One of the most beautiful and considerable estates in

that favoured part of our country was virtually in the market, and Lord Montfort, at the cost of half a million, became the proprietor of Princedown. And here he announced that he should dwell and die.

This state of affairs was a bitter trial to the proudest woman in England, but Lady Montfort was also one of the most able. She resisted nothing, sympathised with all his projects, and watched her opportunity when she could extract from his unconscious good-nature some reasonable modification of them. And she ultimately succeeded in establishing a *modus vivendi*. He was to live and die at Princedown; that was settled; but if he ever came to town, to consult his physicians for example, he was always to inhabit Montfort House, and if she occasionally required a whiff of southern air, she was to have her rooms always ready for her at Princedown. She would not interfere with him in the least; he need not even see her, if he were too unwell. Then as to the general principle of his life, it was quite clear that he was not interested in anything, and never would be

interested in anything; but there was no reason that he should not be amused. This distinction between interest and amusement rather pleased and seemed to satisfy Lord Montfort—but then it was difficult to amuse him. The only thing that ever amused him, he said, were his wife's letters, and as he was the most selfish as well as the most polite of men, he requested her to write to him every day. Great personages, who are selfish and whimsical, are generally surrounded by parasites and buffoons, but this would not suit Lord Montfort; he sincerely detested flattery, and he wearied in eight-and-forty hours of the most successful mountebank in society. What he seemed inclined to was the society of men of science, of travellers in rare parts, and of clever artists, in short of all persons who had what he called 'idiosyncrasy.' Civil engineering was then beginning to attract general attention, and Lord Montfort liked the society of civil engineers; but what he liked most were self-formed men, and to learn the secret of their success, and how they made their fortune. After the first

fit of Princedown was over, Lord Montfort found that it was impossible, even with all its fascination, to secure a constant, or sufficient, presence of civil engineers in such distant parts, and so he got into the habit of coming up to Montfort House, that he might find companions and be amused. Lady Montfort took great pains that he should not be disappointed, and catered for him with all the skill of an accomplished *chef*. Then, when the occasion served, she went down to Princedown herself with welcome guests—and so it turned out, that circumstances, which treated by an ordinary mind must have led to a social scandal, were so adroitly manipulated, that the world little apprehended the real and somewhat mortifying state of affairs. With the utmost license of ill-nature, they could not suppose that Lord and Lady Montfort, living under the same roof, might scarcely see each other for weeks, and that his communications with her, and indeed generally, were always made in writing.

Lady Montfort never could agree with her husband in the cardinal assumption of his

philosophy. One of his reasons for never doing anything, was that there was nothing for him to attain. He had got everything. Here they at once separated in their conclusions. Lady Montfort maintained they had got nothing. 'What,' she would say, 'are rank and wealth to us? We were born to them. We want something that we were not born to. You reason like a parvenu. Of course, if you had created your rank and your riches, you might rest on your oars, and find excitement in the recollection of what you had achieved. A man of your position ought to govern the country, and it always was so in old days. Your family were prime ministers; why not you, with as much talent, and much more knowledge?'

'You would make a very good prime minister, Berengaria.'

'Ah! you always jest, I am serious.'

'And so am I. If I ever am to work, I would sooner be a civil engineer than a prime minister.'

Nothing but the indomitable spirit of Lady Montfort could fight successfully against such

obstacles to her schemes of power as were presented by the peculiar disposition of her lord. Her receptions every Saturday night during the season were the most important of social gatherings, but she held them alone. It was by consummate skill that she had prevailed upon her lord occasionally appearing at their preceding banquets, and when they were over, he flitted for an instant and disappeared. At first, he altogether refused, but then Lady Montfort would induce Royalty, always kind, to condescend to express a wish to dine at Montfort House, and that was a gracious intimation it was impossible not to act upon, and then, as Lady Montfort would say, 'I trust much to the periodical visits of that dear Queen of Mesopotamia. He must entertain her, for his father was her lover.'

In this wonderful mystification, by which Lord Montfort was made to appear as living in a society which he scarcely ever entered, his wife was a little assisted by his visits to Newmarket, which he even frequently attended. He never made a bet or a new acquaintance,

but he seemed to like meeting men with whom he had been at school. There is certainly a magic in the memory of school-boy friendships; it softens the heart, and even affects the nervous system of those who have no hearts. Lord Montfort at Newmarket would ask half a dozen men who had been at school with him, and were now members of the Jockey Club, to be his guests, and the next day all over the heath, and after the heath, all over Mayfair and Belgravia, you heard only one speech, 'I dined yesterday,' or 'the other day,' as the case might be, 'with Montfort; out and out the best dinner I ever had, and such an agreeable fellow; the wittiest, the most amusing, certainly the most charming fellow that ever lived; out and out! It is a pity he does not show a little more.' And society thought the same; they thought it a pity, and a great one, that this fascinating being of whom they rarely caught a glimpse, and who to them took the form of a wasted and unsympathising phantom, should not show a little more and delight them. But the most curious thing was, that however rapturous

were his guests, the feelings of their host after they had left him, were by no means reciprocal. On the contrary, he would remark to himself, 'Have I heard a single thing worth remembering? Not one.'

CHAPTER XVII.

ENDYMION was a little agitated when he arrived at the door of Montfort House, a huge family mansion, situate in a court-yard and looking into the Green Park. When the door was opened he found himself in a large hall with many servants, and he was ushered through several rooms on the ground floor, into a capacious chamber dimly lighted, where there were several gentlemen, but not his hostess. His name was announced, and then a young man came up to him and mentioned that Lord and Lady Montfort would soon be present, and then talked to him about the weather. The Count of Ferroll arrived after Endymion, and then another gentleman whose name he could not catch. Then while he was making some original observations on the east wind, and, to confess the truth, feeling anything

but at his ease, the folding doors of a further chamber brilliantly lighted were thrown open, and almost at the same moment Lady Montfort entered, and, taking the Count of Ferroll's arm, walked into the dining-rnom. It was a round table, and Endymion was told by the same gentleman who had already addressed him, that he was sit by Lady Montfort.

'Lord Montfort is a little late to-day,' she said, 'but he wished me not to wait for him. And how are you after our parliamentary banquet?' she said, turning to Endymion; 'I will introduce you to the Count of Ferroll.'

The Count of Ferroll was a young man, and yet inclined to be bald. He was chief of a not inconsiderable mission at our court. Though not to be described as a handsome man, his countenance was striking; a brow of much intellectual development, and a massive jaw. He was tall, broad-shouldered, with a slender waist. He greeted Endymion with a penetrating glance, and then with a winning smile.

The Count of Ferroll was the representa-

tive of a kingdom which, if not exactly created, had been moulded into a certain form of apparent strength and importance by the Congress of Vienna. He was a noble of considerable estate in a country where possessions were not extensive or fortunes large, though it was ruled by an ancient, and haughty, and warlike aristocracy. Like his class, the Count of Ferroll had received a military education ; but when that education was completed, he found but a feeble prospect of his acquirements being called into action. It was believed that the age of great wars had ceased, and that even revolutions were for the future to be controlled by diplomacy. As he was a man of an original, not to say eccentric, turn of mind, the Count of Ferroll was not contented with the resources and distraction of his second-rate capital. He was an eminent sportsman, and, for some time, took refuge and found excitement in the breadth of his dark forests, and in the formation of a stud, which had already become celebrated. But all this time, even in the excitement of the chase, and in the raising of his rare-bred

steeds, the Count of Ferroll might be said to have been brooding over the position of what he could scarcely call his country, but rather an aggregation of lands baptised by protocols, and christened and consolidated by treaties which he looked upon as eminently untrustworthy. One day he surprised his sovereign, with whom he was a favourite, by requesting to be appointed to the legation at London, which was vacant. The appointment was at once made, and the Count of Ferroll had now been two years at the Court of St. James'.

The Count of Ferroll was a favourite in English society, for he possessed every quality which there conduces to success. He was of great family and of distinguished appearance, munificent and singularly frank; was a dead-shot, and the boldest of riders, with horses which were the admiration alike of Melton and Newmarket. The ladies also approved of him, for he was a consummate waltzer, and mixed with a badinage gaily cynical a tone that could be tender and a bewitching smile.

But his great friend was Lady Montfort.

He told her everything, and consulted her on everything; and though he rarely praised anybody, it had reached her ears that the Count of Ferroll had said more than once that she was a greater woman than Louise of Savoy or the Duchesse de Longueville.

There was a slight rustling in the room. A gentleman had entered and glided into his unoccupied chair, which his valet had guarded. 'I fear I am not in time for an oyster,' said Lord Montfort to his neighbour.

The gentleman who had first spoken to Endymion was the secretary of Lord Montfort; then there was a great genius who was projecting a suspension bridge over the Tyne, and that was in Lord Montfort's country. A distinguished officer of the British Museum completed the party with a person who sate opposite Endymion, and whom in the dim twilight he had not recognised, but whom he now beheld with no little emotion. It was Nigel Penruddock. They had not met since his mother's funeral, and the associations of the past agitated Endymion. They

exchanged recognitions; that of Nigel was grave but kind.

The conversation was what is called general, and a great deal on suspension bridges. Lord Montfort himself led off on this, in order to bring out his distinguished guest. The Count of Ferroll was also interested on this subject, as his own government was making inquiries on the matter. The gentleman from the British Museum made some remarks on the mode in which the ancient Egyptians moved masses of granite, and quoted Herodotus to the civil engineer. The civil engineer had never heard of Herodotus, but he said he was going to Egypt in the autumn by desire of Mehemet Ali, and he would undertake to move any mass which was requisite, even if it were a pyramid itself. Lady Montfort, without disturbing the general conversation, whispered in turns to the Count of Ferroll and Endymion, and told the latter that she had paid a visit to Lady Roehampton in the morning—a most delightful visit. There was no person she admired so much as his sister; she quite

loved her. The only person who was silent was Nigel, but Lady Montfort, who perceived everything, addressed him across the table with enthusiasm about some changes he had made in the services of some church, and the countenance of Nigel became suffused like a young saint who has a glimpse of paradise.

After dinner Lady Montfort led Endymion to her lord, and left him seated by his host. Lord Montfort was affable and natural in his manner. He said, 'I have not yet made the acquaintance of Lady Roehampton, for I never go out; but I hope to do so, for Lady Montfort tells me she is quite captivating.'

'She is a very good sister,' said Endymion.

'Lady Montfort has told me a great deal about yourself, and all of it I was glad to hear. I like young men who rise by their merits, and Mr. Sidney Wilton tells Lady Montfort that yours are distinguished.'

'Mr. Sidney Wilton is a kind master, sir.'

'Well, I was his fag at Harrow, and I thought him so,' said Lord Montfort. 'And now about your office; tell me what you do. You were not there first, Lady Montfort says.

Where were you first ? Tell me all about it. I like detail.'

It was impossible to resist such polished and amiable curiosity, and Endymion gratified it with youthful grace. He even gave Lord Montfort a sketch of St. Barbe, inspired probably by the interview of the morning. Lord Montfort was quite amused with this, and said he should so much like to know Mr. St. Barbe. It was clear, when the party broke up, that Endymion had made a favourable impression, for Lord Montfort said, 'You came here to-day as Lady Montfort's friend, but you must come in future as mine also. And will you understand, I dine at home every day when I am in town, and I give you a general invitation. Come as often as you like ; you will be always welcome. Only let the house know your intention an hour before dinner-time, as I have a particular aversion to the table being crowded, or seeing an empty chair.'

Lady Montfort had passed much of the evening in earnest conversation with Nigel, and when the guests quitted the room, Nigel and Endymion walked away together.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE meeting between Nigel and Endymion was not an ordinary one, and when they were at length alone, neither of them concealed his feelings of pleasure and surprise at its occurrence. Nigel had been a curate in the northern town which was defended by Lord Montfort's proud castle, and his labours and reputation had attracted the attention of Lady Montfort. Under the influence of his powerful character, the services of his church were celebrated with a precision and an imposing effect, which soon occasioned a considerable excitement in the neighbourhood, in time even in the county. The pulpit was frequently at his command, for his rector, who had imbibed his Church views, was not equal to the task of propagating them, and the power and fame of Nigel as a preacher began to be much

rumoured. Although the church at which he officiated was not the one which Lady Montfort usually attended, she was soon among his congregation and remained there. He became a constant guest at the castle, and Lady Montfort presented his church with a reredos of alabaster. She did more than this. Her enthusiasm exceeded her selfishness, for though the sacrifice was great which would deprive her of the ministrations and society of Nigel in the country, she prevailed upon the prime minister to prefer him to a new church in London, which had just fallen vacant, and which being situated in a wealthy and populous district would afford him the opportunity of making known to the world his eloquence and genius. This was Nigel's simple, yet not uneventful history; and then, in turn, he listened to Endymion's brief but interesting narrative of his career, and then they agreed to adjourn to Endymion's chambers and have a good talk over the past and the present.

'That Lady Montfort is a great woman,' said Nigel, standing with his back to the fire.

'She has it in her to be another Empress Helena.'

'Indeed!'

'I believe she has only one thought, and that the only thought worthy the human mind—the Church. I was glad to meet you at her house. You have cherished, I hope, those views, which in your boyhood you so fervently and seriously embraced.'

'I am rather surprised,' said Endymion, not caring to answer this inquiry, 'at a Whig lady entertaining such high views in these matters. The Liberal party rather depends on the Low Church.'

'I know nothing about Whigs or Tories or Liberals, or any other new names which they invent,' said Nigel. 'Nor do I know, or care to know, what Low Church means. There is but one Church, and it is catholic and apostolic; and if we act on its principles, there will be no need, and there ought to be no need, for any other form of government.'

'Well, those are very distinct views,' said Endymion, 'but are they as practical as they are clear?'

'Why should they not be practical? Everything is practical which we believe; and in the long run, which is most likely that we should believe, what is taught by God, or what is taught by man?'

'I confess,' said Endymion, 'that in all matters, both civil and religious, I incline to what is moderate and temperate. I always trace my dear father's sad end, and all the terrible events in my family, to his adopting in 1829 the views of the extreme party. If he had only followed the example and the advice of his best friend, Mr. Sidney Wilton, what a different state of affairs might have occurred!'

'I know nothing about politics,' said Nigel. 'By being moderate and temperate in politics I suppose you mean being adroit, and doing that which is expedient and which will probably be successful. But the Church is founded on absolute truth, and teaches absolute truth, and there can be no compromise on such matters.'

'Well, I do not know,' said Endymion, 'but surely there are many very religious

people, who do not accept without reserve everything that is taught by the Church. I hope I am a religious person myself, and yet, for example, I cannot give an unreserved assent to the whole of the Athanasian Creed.'

'The Athanasian Creed is the most splendid ecclesiastical lyric ever poured forth by the genius of man. I give to every clause of it an implicit assent. It does not pretend to be divine; it is human, but the Church has hallowed it, and the Church ever acts under the influence of the Divine Spirit. St. Athanasius was by far the greatest man that ever existed. If you cavil at his creed, you will soon cavil at other symbols. I was prepared for infidelity in London, but I confess, my dear Ferrars, you alarm me. I was in hopes that your early education would have saved you from this backsliding.'

'But let us be calm, my dear Nigel. Do you mean to say, that I am to be considered an infidel or an apostate because, although I fervently embrace all the vital truths of religion, and try, on the whole, to regulate my life by them, I may have scruples about be-

lieving, for example, in the personality of the Devil?'

'If the personality of Satan be not a vital principle of your religion, I do not know what is. There is only one dogma higher. You think it is safe, and I dare say it is fashionable, to fall into this lax and really thoughtless discrimination between what is and what is not to be believed. It is not good taste to believe in the Devil. Give me a single argument against his personality which is not applicable to the personality of the Deity. Will you give that up; and if so, where are you? Now mark me; you and I are young men—you are a very young man. This is the year of grace 1839. If these loose thoughts, which you have heedlessly taken up, prevail in this country for a generation or so—five and twenty or thirty years—we may meet together again, and I shall have to convince you that there is a God.'

CHAPTER XIX.

THE balance of parties in the House of Commons, which had been virtually restored by Sir Robert Peel's dissolution of 1834, might be said to be formally and positively established by the dissolution of parliament in the autumn of 1837, occasioned by the demise of the crown. The ministerial majority became almost nominal, while troubles from all quarters seemed to press simultaneously upon them: Canadian revolts, Chartist insurrections, Chinese squabbles, and mysterious complications in Central Asia, which threatened immediate hostilities with Persia, and even with one of the most powerful of European empires. In addition to all this, the revenue continually declined, and every day the general prejudice became more intense against the Irish policy of the ministry. The extreme popularity of

the Sovereign, reflecting some lustre on her ministers, had enabled them, though not without difficulty, to tide through the session of 1838; but when parliament met in 1839 their prospects were dark, and it was known that there was a section of the extreme Liberals who would not be deeply mortified if the government were overthrown. All efforts, therefore, political and social, and particularly the latter in which the Whigs excelled, were to be made to prevent or to retard the catastrophe.

Lady Montfort and Lady Roehampton opened their houses to the general world at an unusually early period. Their entertainments rivalled those of Zenobia, who with unflagging gallantry, her radiant face prescient of triumph, stopped her bright vis-à-vis and her tall footmen in the midst of St. James' Street or Pall Mall, while she rapidly inquired from some friendly passer-by whom she had observed, 'Tell me the names of the Radical members who want to turn out the government, and I will invite them directly.'

Lady Montfort had appropriated the Saturdays, as was her custom and her right;

so Myra, with the advice of Lord Roehampton, had fixed on Wednesdays for her receptions.

'I should have liked to have taken Wednesdays,' said Zenobia, 'but I do not care to seem to be setting up against Lady Roehampton, for her mother was my dearest friend. Not that I think any quarter ought to be shown to her after joining those atrocious Whigs, but to be sure she was corrupted by her husband, whom I remember the most thorough Tory going. To be sure, I was a Whig myself in those days, so one must not say too much about it, but the Whigs then were gentlemen. I will tell you what I will do. I will receive both on Saturdays and Wednesdays. It is an effort, and I am not as young as I was, but it will only be for a season or less, for I know these people cannot stand. It will be all over by May.'

Prince Florestan had arrived in town, and was now settled in his mansion in Carlton Terrace. It was the fashion among the *crème de la crème* to keep aloof from him. The Tories did not love revolutionary dynasties, and the Whigs being in office could not sanc-

tion a pretender, and one who, they significantly intimated with a charitable shrug of the shoulders, was not a very scrupulous one. The prince himself, though he was not insensible to the charms of society, and especially of agreeable women, was not much chagrined by this. The world thought that he had fitted up his fine house, and bought his fine horses, merely for the enjoyment of life. His purposes were very different. Though his acquaintances were limited, they were not undistinguished, and he lived with them in intimacy. There had arisen between himself and Mr. Waldershare the closest alliance both of thought and habits. They were rarely separated. The prince was also a frequent guest at the Neuchatels', and was a favourite with the head of the house.

The Duke of St. Angelo controlled the household at Carlton Gardens with skill. The appointments were finished and the cuisine refined. There was a dinner twice a week, from which Waldershare was rarely absent, and to which Endymion, whom the prince always treated with kindness, had a general

invitation. When he occasionally dined there he met always several foreign guests, and all men apparently of mark—at any rate, all distinguished by their intelligence. It was an interesting and useful house for a young man, and especially a young politician, to frequent. Endymion heard many things and learnt many things which otherwise would not have met his ear or mind. The prince encouraged conversation, though himself inclined to taciturnity. When he did speak, his terse remarks and condensed views were striking, and were remembered. On the days on which he did not receive, the prince dined at the Travellers' Club, to which Waldershare had obtained his introduction, and generally with Waldershare, who took this opportunity of gradually making his friend acquainted with eminent and influential men, many of whom in due time became guests at Carlton Terrace. It was clear, indeed, that these club-dinners were part of a system.

The prince, soon after his arrival in town, while riding, had passed Lady Roehampton's carriage in the park, and he had saluted her

with a grave grace which distinguished him. She was surprised at feeling a little agitated by this rencontre. It recalled Hainault, her not mortifying but still humble position beneath that roof, the prince's courtesy to her under those circumstances, and, indeed, his marked preference for her society. She felt it something like ingratitude to treat him with neglect now, when her position was so changed and had become so elevated. She mentioned to Lord Roehampton, while they were dining alone, that she should like to invite the prince to her receptions, and asked his opinion on the point. Lord Roehampton shrugged his shoulders and did not encourage her. 'You know, my darling, our people do not much like him. They look upon him as a pretender, as having forfeited his parole, and as a refugee from justice. I have no prejudices against him myself, and perhaps in the same situation might have acted in the same manner; but if he is to be admitted into society, it should hardly be at a ministerial reception, and of all houses, that of one who holds my particular post.'

'I know nothing about his forfeiting his parole,' said Lady Roehampton; 'the charge is involved in mystery, and Mr. Waldershare told me it was an entire fabrication. As for his being a pretender, he seems to me as legitimate a prince as most we meet; he was born in the purple, and his father was recognised by every government in Europe except our own. As for being a refugee from justice, a prince in captivity has certainly a right to escape if he can, and his escape was romantic. However, I will not contest any decision of yours, for I think you are always right. Only I am disappointed, for, to say nothing of the unkindness, I cannot help feeling our not noticing him is rather shabby.'

There was silence, a longer silence than usually occurred in *tête-à-tête* dinners between Lord and Lady Roehampton. To break the silence he began to converse on another subject, and Lady Roehampton replied to him cheerfully, but curtly. He saw she was vexed, and this great man, who was at that time meditating one of the most daring acts of

modern diplomacy, who had the reputation, in the conduct of public affairs, of not only being courageous, but of being stern, inflexible, unfeeling, and unscrupulous beyond ordinary statesmen, who had passed his mornings in writing a menacing despatch to a great power and intimating combinations to the ambassadors of other first-rate states which they almost trembled to receive, was quite upset by seeing his wife chagrined. At last, after another embarrassing pause, he said gaily, 'Do you know, my dear Myra, I do not see why you should not ask Prince Florestan. It is you that ask him, not I. That is one of the pleasant results of our system of political entertainments. The guests come to pay their respects to the lady of the house, so no one is committed. The prince may visit you on Wednesday just as well as the leaders of the opposition who want our places, or the malcontent Radicals who they say are going to turn us out.'

So Prince Florestan was invited to Lady Rochampton's receptions, and he came; and he never missed one. His visits were brief. He

appeared, made his bow, had the pleasure of some slight conversation with her, and then soon retired. Received by Lady Roehampton, in time, though sluggishly, invitations arrived from other houses, but he rarely availed himself of them. He maintained in this respect great reserve, and was accustomed to say that the only fine lady in London who had ever been kind to him was Lady Roehampton.

All this time Endymion, who was now thoroughly planted in society, saw a great deal of the Neuchatels, who had returned to Portland Place at the beginning of February. He met Adriana almost every evening, and was frequently invited to the house—to the grand dinners now, as well as the domestic circle. In short, our Endymion was fast becoming a young man of fashion and a personage. The brother of Lady Roehampton had now become the private secretary of Mr. Sidney Wilton and the great friend of Lady Montfort. He was indeed only one of the numerous admirers of that lady, but he seemed not the least smiled on. There was never anything delightful at Montfort House at

which he was not present, or indeed in any other place, for under her influence, invitations from the most distinguished houses crowded his mantelpiece and were stuck all round his looking-glass. Endymion in this whirl of life did not forget his old friends. He took care that Seymour Hicks should have frequent invitations to Lady Roehampton's assemblies. Seymour Hicks only wanted a lever to raise the globe, and this introduction supplied him with one. It was astonishing how he made his way in society, and though, of course, he never touched the empyrean regions in which Endymion now breathed, he gradually, and at last rapidly, planted himself in a world which to the uninitiated figures as the very realm of nobility and fashion, and where doubtless is found a great fund of splendour, refinement, and amusement. Seymour Hicks was not ill-favoured and was always well-dressed, and he was very civil, but what he really owed his social advancement to was his indomitable will. That quality governs all things, and though the will of Seymour Hicks was directed to what many may deem a petty

or a contracted purpose, life is always interesting when you have a purpose and live in its fulfilment. It appeared from what he told Endymion that matters at the office had altered a good deal since he left it. The retirement of St. Barbe was the first brick out of the wall; now, which Endymion had not yet heard, the brother of Trenchard had most unexpectedly died, and that gentleman come into a good estate. 'Jawett remains, and is also the editor of the "Precursor," but his new labours so absorb his spare time that he is always at the office of the paper. So it is pretty well all over with the table at Joe's. I confess I could not stand it any longer, particularly after you left. I have got into the junior Pan-Ionian; and I am down for the senior; I cannot get in for ten years, but when I do it will be a *coup*; the society there is tiptop, a cabinet minister sometimes, and very often a bishop.'

CHAPTER XX.

ENDYMION was glad to meet Baron Sergius one day when he dined with Prince Florestan. There were several distinguished foreigners among the guests, who had just arrived. They talked much, and with much emphasis. One of them, the Marquis of Vallombrosa, expatiated on the Latin race, their great qualities, their vivacity, invention, vividness of perception, chivalrous valour, and sympathy with tradition. The northern races detested them, and the height of statesmanship was to combine the Latin races into an organised and active alliance against the barbarism which menaced them. There had been for a short time a vacant place next to Endymion, when Baron Sergius, according to his quiet manner, stole into the room and slipped into the unoccupied seat. 'It is some time since we

met,' he said, 'but I have heard of you. You are now a public man, and not a public character. That is a not unsatisfactory position.'

The prince listened apparently with much interest to the Marquis of Vallombrosa, occasionally asked him a question, and promoted discussion without himself giving any opinion. Baron Sergius never spoke except to Endymion, and then chiefly social inquiries about Lord and Lady Roehampton, their good friends the Neuchatels, and frequently about Mr. Sidney Wilton, whom, it appeared, he had known years ago, and intimately. After dinner the guests, on their return to the saloon, ranged themselves in a circle, but not too formally, and the prince moving round addressed each of them in turn. When this royal ceremony was concluded, the prince motioned to the Marquis of Vallombrosa to accompany him, and then they repaired to an adjacent saloon, the door of which was open, but where they could converse without observation. The Duke of St. Angelo amused the remaining guests with all the resources of a man practised in making people feel at their

ease, and in this he was soon greatly assisted by Mr. Waldershare, who was unable to dine with the prince to-day, but who seemed to take much interest in this arrival of the representatives of the Latin race.

Baron Sergius and Endymion were sitting together rather apart from the rest. The baron said, 'You have heard to-day a great deal about the Latin race, their wondrous qualities, their peculiar destiny, their possible danger. It is a new idea, or rather a new phrase, that I observe is now getting into the political world, and is probably destined to produce consequences. No man will treat with indifference the principle of race. It is the key of history, and why history is often so confused is that it has been written by men who were ignorant of this principle and all the knowledge it involves. As one who may become a statesman and assist in governing mankind, it is necessary that you should not be insensible to it; whether you encounter its influence in communities or in individuals, its qualities must ever be taken into account. But there is no subject which more requires

discriminating knowledge, or where your illustrating principle, if you are not deeply founded, may not chance to turn out a will-o'-the-wisp. Now this great question of the Latin race, by which M. de Vallombrosa may succeed in disturbing the world—it might be well to inquire where the Latin race is to be found. In the North of Italy peopled by Germans and named after Germans, or in the South of Italy, swarming with the descendants of Normans and Arabs? Shall we find the Latin race in Spain, stocked by Goths, and Moors, and Jews? Or in France, where there is a great Celtic nation, occasionally mingled with Franks? Now I do not want to go into the origin of man and nations—I am essentially practical, and only endeavour to comprehend that with which I have personally to deal, and that is sufficiently difficult. In Europe I find three great races with distinct qualities—the Teutons, the Sclaves, and the Celts; and their conduct will be influenced by those distinctive qualities. There is another great race which influences the world, the Semites. Certainly, when I was at the Con-

gress of Vienna, I did not believe that the Arabs were more likely to become a conquering race again than the Tatars, and yet it is a question at this moment whether Mehemet Ali, at their head, may not found a new empire in the Mediterranean. The Semites are unquestionably a great race, for among the few things in this world which appear to be certain, nothing is more sure than that they invented our alphabet. But the Semites now exercise a vast influence over affairs by their smallest though most peculiar family, the Jews. There is no race gifted with so much tenacity, and such skill in organisation. These qualities have given them an unprecedented hold over property and illimitable credit. As you advance in life, and get experience in affairs, the Jews will cross you everywhere. They have long been stealing into our secret diplomacy, which they have almost appropriated; in another quarter of a century they will claim their share of open government. Well, these are races; men and bodies of men influenced in their conduct by their particular organisation, and which must enter into all the

calculations of a statesman. But what do they mean by the Latin race? Language and religion do not make a race—there is only one thing which makes a race, and that is blood.'

'But the prince,' said Endymion inquiringly; 'he seemed much interested in what M. de Vallombrosa was saying; I should like to know what his opinions are about the Latin race.'

'The prince rarely gives an opinion,' said the baron. 'Indeed, as you well know, he rarely speaks; he thinks and he acts.'

'But if he acts on wrong information,' continued Endymion, 'there will probably be only one consequence.'

'The prince is very wise,' said the baron; 'and, trust me, knows as much about mankind, and the varieties of mankind, as anyone. He may not believe in the Latin race, but he may choose to use those who do believe in it. The weakness of the prince, if he have one, is not want of knowledge, or want of judgment, but an over-confidence in his star, which sometimes seduces him into enterprises which he himself feels at the time are not perfectly sound.'

CHAPTER XXI.

The interest of the town was now divided between the danger of the government and the new preacher who electrified the world at St. Rosicrucius. The Rev. Nigel Penruddock was not at all a popular preacher according to the vulgar acceptation of the term. He disdained all cant and clap-trap. He preached Church principles with commanding eloquence, and he practised them with unceasing devotion. His church was always open, yet his schools were never neglected; there was a perfect choir, a staff of disciplined curates, young and ascetic, while sacred sisters, some of patrician blood, fearless and prepared for martyrdom, were gliding about all the back slums of his ferocious neighbourhood. How came the Whigs to give such a church to such a person? There must have been some mis-

take. But how came it that all the Whig ladies were among the most devoted of his congregation? The government whips did not like it; at such a critical period too, when it was necessary to keep the Dissenters up to the mark! And there was Lady Montfort and Lady Roehampton never absent on a Sunday, and their carriages, it was whispered, were often suspiciously near to St. Rosicrucius on week days. Mr. Sidney Wilton too was frequently in Lady Roehampton's pew, and one day, absolutely my lord himself, who unfortunately was rarely seen at church—but then, as is well known, critical despatches always arrive on a Sunday morning—was successfully landed in her pew by Lady Roehampton, and was very much struck indeed by what he heard. 'The fact is,' as he afterwards observed, 'I wish we had such a fellow on our bench in the House of Commons.'

About this time also there was another event, which, although not of so general an interest, much touched the feelings of Endymion, and this was the marriage of the Earl of Beaumaris with Imogene. It was solem-

nised in as private and quiet a manner as possible. Waldershare was the best man, and there were no bridesmaids. The only other persons invited by Mr. Rodney, who gave away the bride, were Endymion and Mr. Vigo.

One morning, a few days before the wedding, Sylvia, who had written to ask Lady Roehampton for an interview, called by appointment in St. James' Square. Sylvia was received by Lady Roehampton in her boudoir, and the interview was long. Sylvia, who by nature was composed, and still more so by art, was pale and nervous when she arrived, so much so that her demeanour was noticed by the groom of the chambers; but when she departed, her countenance was flushed and radiant, though it was obvious that she had been shedding tears. On the morning of the wedding, Lady Roehampton in her lord's brougham called for Endymion at the Albany, and then they went together to the vestry of St. James' Church. Lord Beaumaris and Mr. Waldershare had arrived. The bridegroom was a little embarrassed when he was pre-

sented to Lady Roehampton. He had made up his mind to be married, but not to be introduced to a stranger, and particularly a lady; but Mr. Waldershare fluttered over them and put all right. It was only the perplexity of a moment, for the rest of the wedding party now appeared. Imogene, who was in a travelling dress, was pale and serious, but transcendently beautiful. She attempted to touch Lady Roehampton's hand with her lips when Myra welcomed her, but Lady Roehampton would not permit this and kissed her. Everybody was calm during the ceremony except Endymion, who had been silent the whole morning. He stood by the altar with that convulsion of the throat and that sickness of the heart which accompany the sense of catastrophe. He was relieved by some tears which he easily concealed. Nobody noticed him, for all were thinking of themselves. After the ceremony, they all returned to the vestry, and Lady Roehampton with the others signed the registry. Lord and Lady Beaumaris instantly departed for the continent.

'A strange event!' exclaimed Lady Roehampton, as she threw herself back in the brougham and took her brother's hand. 'But not stranger than what has happened to ourselves. Fortune seems to attend on our ruined home. I thought the bride looked beautiful.'

Endymion was silent.

'You are not gay this morning, my dear,' said Lady Roehampton; 'they say that weddings are depressing. Now I am in rather high spirits. I am very glad that Imogene has become Lady Beaumaris. She is beautiful, and dangerously beautiful. Do you know, my Endymion, I have had some uneasy moments about this young lady. Women are prescient in these matters, and I have observed with anxiety, that you admired her too much yourself.'

'I am sure you had no reason, Myra,' said Endymion, blushing deeply.

'Certainly not from what you said, my dear. It was from what you did not say that I became alarmed. You seldom mentioned her name, and when I referred to her, you always turned the conversation. However,

that is all over now. She is Countess of Beaumaris,' added Myra, dwelling slowly and with some unction on the title, 'and may be a powerful friend to you; and I am Countess of Roehampton, and am your friend, also not quite devoid of power. And there are other countesses, I suspect, on whose good wishes you may rely. If we cannot shape your destiny, there is no such thing as witchcraft. No, Endymion, marriage is a mighty instrument in your hands. It must not be lightly used. Come in and lunch; my lord is at home, and I know he wants to see you.'

CHAPTER XXII.

WHAT was most remarkable, and most interesting, in the character of Berengaria was her energy. She had the power of exciting others to action in a degree rarely possessed. She had always some considerable object in contemplation, occasionally more than one, and never foresaw difficulties. Her character was, however, singularly feminine; she never affected to be a superior woman. She never reasoned, did not read much, though her literary taste was fine and fastidious. Though she required constant admiration and consequently encouraged it, she was not a heartless coquette. Her sensibility was too quick, and as the reign of her favourites was sometimes brief, she was looked upon as capricious. The truth is, what seemed whimsical in her affections was occasioned by the subtlety of her

taste, which was not always satisfied by the increased experience of intimacy. Whenever she made a friend not unworthy of her, she was constant and entirely devoted.

At present, Berengaria had two great objects ; one was to sustain the Whig government in its troubles, and the other was to accomplish an unprecedented feat in modern manners, and that was no less than to hold a tournament, a real tournament, in the autumn, at the famous castle of her lord in the north of England.

The lord-lieutenant had not been in his county for two years ; he had even omitted to celebrate Christmas at his castle, which had shocked everybody, for its revelry was looked upon almost as the tenure by which the Montforts held their estates. His plea of ill health, industriously circulated by all his agents, obtained neither sympathy nor credence. His county was rather a weak point with Lord Montfort, for though he could not bear his home, he was fond of power, and power depended on his territorial influence. The representation of his county by his family,

and authority in the local parliamentary boroughs, were the compensations held out to him for the abolition of his nomination boroughs. His wife dexterously availed herself of this state of affairs to obtain his assent to her great project, which, it would appear, might not only amuse him, but, in its unprecedented magnificence and novelty, must sweep away all discontents, and gratify every class.

Lord Montfort had placed unlimited resources at the disposal of Berengaria for the fulfilment of her purpose, and at times even showed some not inconsiderable though fitful interest in her progress. He turned over the drawings of the various costumes and armour with a gracious smile, and, having picked up on such subjects a great deal of knowledge, occasionally made suggestions which were useful and sometimes embarrassing. The heralds were all called into council, and Garter himself deigned to regulate the order of proceedings. Some of the finest gentlemen in London, of both parties in the state, passed the greater part of their spring mornings in

jousting, and in practising all the manœuvres of the lists. Lady Montfort herself was to be the Queen of the Tournament, and she had prevailed on Lady Roehampton to accept the supreme office of Queen of Beauty.

It was the early part of May, and Zenobia held one of her great assemblies. Being in high good humour, sanguine and prophetic of power, she had asked all the great Whig ladies, and, the times being critical, they had come. Berengaria seemed absorbed by the details of her tournament. She met many of her knights, and she conferred with them all; the Knight of the Bleeding Heart, the Knight of Roses, the Knight of the Crystal Shield.

Endymion, who was not to be a knight, but a gentleman-at-arms in attendance on the Queen of the Tournament, mentioned that Prince Florestan much wished to be a jouster; he had heard this from the Duke of St. Angelo, and Lady Montfort, though she did not immediately sanction, did not absolutely refuse, the request.

Past midnight, there was a sudden stir in the saloons. The House of Commons had

broken up and many members were entering. There had been a division on the Jamaica question, and the ministers had only a majority of five. The leader of the House of Commons had intimated, not to say announced, their consequent resignation.

'Have you heard what they say?' said Endymion anxiously to Lady Montfort.

'Yes, I heard; but do not look so grave.'

'Do I look grave?'

'As if it were the last day.'

'I fear it is.'

'I am not so sure. I doubt whether Sir Robert thinks it ripe enough; and after all, we are not in a minority. I do not see why we should have resigned. I wish I could see Lord Roehampton.'

Affairs did not proceed so rapidly as the triumphant Zenobia expected. They were out, no question about that; but it was not so certain who was in. A day passed and another day, and even Zenobia, who knew everything before anybody, remained in the dark. The suspense became protracted and

even more mysterious. Almost a week had elapsed; noble lords and right honourable gentlemen were calling on Sir Robert every morning, according to the newspapers, but no one could hear from any authority of any appointment being really made. At last, there was a whisper very late one night at Crockford's, which was always better informed on these matters than the political clubs, and people looked amazed, and stared incredulously in each other's face. But it was true; there was a hitch, and in four-and-twenty hours the cause of the hitch was known. It seemed that the ministry really had resigned, but Berengaria, Countess of Montfort, had not followed their example.

What a dangerous woman! even wicked! Zenobia was for sending her to the Tower at once. 'It was clearly impossible,' she declared, 'for Sir Robert to carry on affairs with such a Duchesse de Longueville always at the ear of our young Queen, under the pretence forsooth of being the friend of Her Majesty's youth.'

This was the famous Bed-Chamber Plot,

in which the Conservative leaders, as is now generally admitted, were decidedly in error, and which terminated in the return of the Whigs to office.

'But we must reconstruct,' said Lady Montfort to the prime minister. 'Sidney Wilton must be Secretary of State. And you,' she said to Endymion, when she communicated to him the successful result of her interference, 'you will go with him. It is a great thing at your age to be private secretary to a Secretary of State.'

CHAPTER XXIII.

MONTFORT CASTLE was the stronghold of England against the Scotch invader. It stood on a high and vast table-land, with the town of Montfort on one side at its feet, and on the other a wide-spreading and sylvan domain, herded with deer of various races, and terminating in pine forests; beyond them moors and mountains. The donjon keep, tall and grey, that had arrested the Douglas, still remained intact, and many an ancient battlement; but the long list of the Lords of Montfort had successively added to the great structure according to the genius of the times, so that still with the external appearance generally of a feudal castle, it combined in its various courts and quadrangles all the splendour and convenience of a modern palace.

But though it had witnessed many scenes and sights, and as strange ones as any old walls in this ancient land, it may be doubted whether the keep of Montfort ever looked down on anything more rare than the life that was gathering and disporting itself in its towers and halls, and courts and parks, and forest chase, in the memorable autumn of this year.

Berengaria had repaired to her castle full of triumph ; her lord, in high good humour, admiring his wife for her energy, yet with a playful malice apparently enjoying the opportunity of showing that the chronology of her arrangements was confused, and her costume incorrect. They had good-naturedly taken Endymion down with them ; for travelling to the Border in those times was a serious affair for a clerk in a public office. Day after day the other guests arrived ; the rivals in the tourney were among the earliest, for they had to make themselves acquainted with the land which was to be the scene of their exploits. There came the Knights of the Griffin, and the Dragon, and the Black Lion and

the Golden Lion, and the Dolphin and the Stag's Head, and they were all always scrupulously addressed by their chivalric names, instead of by the Tommys and the Jemmys that circulated in the affectionate circle of White's, or the Gusseys and the Regys of Belgravian tea-parties. After a time duly appeared the Knight of the White Rose, whose armour shielded the princely form of Florestan; and this portion of the company was complete when the Black Knight at length reached the castle, who had been detained by his attendance on a conference at St. James', in the character of the Count of Ferroll.

If anything could add to the delight and excitement of Berengaria, it would seem to be the arrival of the Count of Ferroll.

Other guests gradually appeared, who were to sustain other characters in the great pageant. There was the Judge of Peace, and the Knight Marshal of the Lists, and the Jester, who was to ride on a caparisoned mule trapped with bells, and himself bearing a sceptre. Mr. Sidney Wilton came down, who had promised to be King of the Tournament;

and, though rather late, for my lord had been detained by the same cause as the Count of Ferroll, at length arrived the Queen of Beauty herself.

If the performance, to which all contiguous Britain intended to repair—for irrespective of the railroads which now began sensibly to affect the communications in the north of England, steamers were chartering from every port for passengers to the Montfort tournament within one hundred miles' distance—were equal to the preparation, the affair must be a great success. The grounds round the castle seemed to be filled every day with groups of busy persons in fanciful costume, all practising their duties and rehearsing their parts; swordsmen and bowmen, and seneschals and esquires, and grooms and pages, and heralds in tabards, and pursuivants, and banner-bearers. The splendid pavilions of the knights were now completed, and the gorgeous throne of the Queen of Beauty, surrounded by crimson galleries, tier above tier, for thousands of favoured guests, were receiving only their last stroke of magnificence. The mornings passed

in a feverish whirl of curiosity, and preparation, and excitement, and some anxiety. Then succeeded the banquet, where nearly one hundred guests were every day present; but the company were so absorbed in the impending event that none expected or required, in the evenings, any of the usual schemes or sources of amusement that abound in country houses. Comments on the morning, and plans for the morrow, engrossed all thought and conversation, and my lord's band was just a due accompaniment that filled the pauses when perplexities arrested talk, or deftly blended with some whispered phrase almost as sweet or thrilling as the notes of the cornet-à-piston.

'I owe my knighthood to you,' said Prince Florestan to Lady Roehampton, 'as I do everything in this country that is agreeable.'

'You cannot be my knight,' replied Lady Roehampton, 'because I am told I am the sovereign of all the chivalry, but you have my best wishes.'

'All that I want in life,' said the prince, 'are your good wishes.'

'I fear they are barren.'

'No, they are inspiring,' said the prince with unusual feeling. 'You brought me good fortune. From the moment I saw you, light fell upon my life.'

'Is not that an exaggerated phrase?' said Lady Roehampton with a smile, 'because I happened to get you a ticket for a masquerade.'

'I was thinking of something else,' said the prince pensively, 'but life is a masquerade; at least mine has been.'

'I think yours, sir, is a most interesting life,' said Lady Roehampton, 'and, were I you, I would not quarrel with my destiny.'

'My destiny is not fulfilled,' said the prince. 'I have never quarrelled with it, and am least disposed to do so at this moment.'

'Mr. Sidney Wilton was speaking to me very much the other day about your royal mother, sir, Queen Agrippina. She must have been fascinating.'

'I like fascinating women,' said the prince, 'but they are rare.'

'Perhaps it is better it should be so,'

said Lady Roehampton, 'for they are apt—are they not?—to disturb the world.'

'I confess I like to be bewitched,' said the prince, 'and I do not care how much the world is disturbed.'

'But is not the world very well as it is?' said Lady Roehampton. 'Why should we not be happy and enjoy it?'

'I do enjoy it,' replied Prince Florestan, 'especially at Montfort Castle; I suppose there is something in the air that agrees with one. But enjoyment of the present is consistent with objects for the future.'

'Ah! now you are thinking of your great affairs—of your kingdom. My woman's brain is not equal to that.'

'I think your brain is quite equal to kingdoms,' said the prince with a serious expression, and speaking in even a lower voice, 'but I was not thinking of my kingdom. I leave that to fate; I believe it is destined to be mine, and therefore occasions me thought but not anxiety. I was thinking of something else than kingdoms, and of which unhappily I am not so certain—of which I am most un-

certain—of which I fear I have no chance—and yet which is dearer to me than even my crown.'

'What can that be?' said Lady Roehampton with unaffected wonderment.

''Tis a secret of chivalry,' said Prince Florestan, 'and I must never disclose it.'

'It is a wonderful scene,' said Adriana Neuchatel to Endymion, who had been for some time conversing with her. 'I had no idea that I should be so much amused by anything in society. But then, it is so unlike anything one has ever seen.'

Mrs. Neuchatel had not accompanied her husband and her daughter to the Montfort Tournament. Mr. Neuchatel required a long holiday, and after the tournament he was to take Adriana to Scotland. Mrs. Neuchatel shut herself up at Hainault, which it seemed she had never enjoyed before. She could hardly believe it was the same place, freed from its daily invasions by the House of Commons and the Stock Exchange. She had never lived so long without seeing an ambassador or a cabinet minister, and it was quite a relief.

She wandered in the gardens, and drove her pony-chair in forest glades. She missed Adriana very much, and for a few days always expected her to enter the room when the door opened ; and then she sighed, and then she flew to her easel, or buried herself in some sublime cantata of her favourite master, Beethoven. Then came the most wonderful performance of the whole day, and that was the letter, never missed, to Adriana. Considering that she lived in solitude, and in a spot with which her daughter was quite familiar, it was really marvellous that the mother should every day be able to fill so many interesting and impassioned pages. But Mrs. Neuchatel was a fine penwoman ; her feelings were her facts, and her ingenious observations of art and nature were her news. After the first fever of separation, reading was always a resource to her, for she was a great student. She was surrounded by all the literary journals and choice publications of Europe, and there scarcely was a branch of science and learning with which she was not sufficiently familiar to be able to comprehend the stir and progress

of the European mind. Mrs. Neuchatel had contrived to get rid of the chief cook by sending him on a visit to Paris, so she could, without cavil, dine off a cutlet and seltzer-water in her boudoir. Sometimes, not merely for distraction, but more from a sense of duty, she gave festivals to her schools, and when she had lived like a princely prisoner of state alone for a month, or rather like one on a desert isle who sighs to see a sail, she would ask a great geologist and his wife to pay her a visit, or some professor, who, though himself not worth a shilling, had some new plans, which really sounded quite practical, for the more equal distribution of wealth.

'And who is your knight?' said Endymion.

Adriana looked distressed.

'I mean, whom do you wish to win?'

'Oh, I should like them all to win!'

'That is good-natured, but then there would be no distinction. I know who is going to wear your colours—the Knight of the Dolphin.'

'I hope nothing of that kind will happen,'

said Adriana, agitated. 'I know that some of the knights are going to wear ladies' colours, but I trust no one will think of wearing mine. I know the Black Knight wears Lady Montfort's.'

'He cannot,' said Endymion hastily. 'She is first lady to the Queen of Beauty; no knight can wear the colours of the Queen. I asked Sir Morte d'Arthur himself, and he told me there was no doubt about it, and that he had consulted Garter before he came down.'

'Well, all I know is that the Count of Ferroll told me so,' said Adriana; 'I sate next to him at dinner.'

'He shall not wear her colours,' said Endymion quite angrily. 'I will speak to the King of the Tournament about it directly.'

'Why, what does it signify?' said Adriana.

'You thought it signified when I told you Regy Sutton was going to wear your colours.'

'Ah! that is quite a different business,' said Adriana with a sigh.

Reginald Sutton was a professed admirer

of Adriana, rode with her whenever he could, and danced with her immensely. She gave him cold encouragement, though he was the best-looking and best-dressed youth in England; but he was a determined young hero, not gifted with too sensitive nerves, and was a votary of the great theory that all in life was an affair of will, and that endowed with sufficient energy he might marry whom he liked. He accounted for his slow advance in London by the inimical presence of Mrs. Neuchatel, who he felt, or fancied, did not sympathise with him, while, on the contrary, he got on very well with the father, and so he was determined to seize the present opportunity. The mother was absent, and he himself in a commanding position, being one of the knights to whose exploits the eyes of all England were attracted.

Lord Roehampton was seated between an ambassadress and Berengaria, indulging in gentle and sweet-voiced raillery; the Count of Ferroll was standing beside Lady Montfort, and Mr. Wilton was opposite to the group. The Count of Ferroll rarely spoke, but listened

to Lady Montfort with what she called one of his dark smiles.

'All I know is, she will never pardon you for not asking her,' said Lord Roehampton. 'I saw Bicester the day I left town, and he was very grumpy. He said that Lady Bicester was the only person who understood tournaments. She had studied the subject.'

'I suppose she wanted to be the Queen of Beauty,' said Berengaria.

'You are too severe, my dear lady. I think she would have been contented with a knight wearing her colours.'

'Well, I cannot help it,' said Berengaria, but somewhat doubtingly. And then, after a moment's pause, 'She is too ugly.'

'Why, she came to my fancy ball, and it is not five years ago, as Mary, Queen of Scots!'

'That must have been after the Queen's decapitation,' said Berengaria.

'I wonder you did not ask Zenobia,' said Mr. Wilton.

'Of course I asked her, but I knew she would not come. She is in one of her hatreds

now. She said she would have come, only she had half-promised to give a ball to the tenants at Merrington about that time, and she did not like to disappoint them. Quite touching, was it not?'

'A touch beyond the reach of art,' said Mr. Wilton; 'almost worthy of yourself, Lady Montfort.'

'And what do you think of all this?' asked Lord Montfort of Nigel Penruddock, who, in a cassock that swept the ground, had been stalking about the glittering saloons like a prophet who had been ordained in Mayfair, but who had now seated himself by his host.

'I am thinking of what is beneath all this,' replied Nigel. 'A great revivification. Chivalry is the child of the Church; it is the distinctive feature of Christian Europe. Had it not been for the revival of Church principles, this glorious pageant would never have occurred. But it is a pageant only to the uninitiated. There is not a ceremony, a form, a phrase, a costume, which is not symbolic of a great truth or a high purpose.'

'I do not think Lady Montfort is aware of all this,' said her lord.

'Oh yes!' said Nigel. 'Lady Montfort is a great woman—a woman who could inspire crusades and create churches. She might, and she will, I trust, rank with the Helenas and the Matildas.'

Lord Montfort gave a little sound, but so gentle that it was heard probably but by himself, which in common language would be styled a whistle—an articulate modulation of the breath which in this instance expressed a sly sentiment of humorous amazement.

'Well, Mr. Ferrars,' said Mr. Neuchatel with a laughing eye, to that young gentleman, as he encountered Endymion passing by, 'and how are you getting on? Are we to see you to-morrow in a Milanese suit?'

'I am only a page,' said Endymion.

'Well, well, the old Italian saying is, "A page beats a knight," at least with the ladies.'

'Do not you think it very absurd,' said Endymion, 'that the Count of Ferroll says he shall wear Lady Montfort's colours? Lady Montfort is only the first lady of the Queen of

Beauty, and she can wear no colours except the Queen's. Do not you think somebody ought to interfere?'

'Hem! The Count of Ferroll is a man who seldom makes a mistake,' said Mr. Neuchatel.

'So everybody says,' said Endymion rather testily; 'but I do not see that.'

'Now, you are a very young man,' said Mr. Neuchatel, 'and I hope you will some day be a statesman. I do not see why you should not, if you are industrious and stick to your master, for Mr. Sidney Wilton is a man who will always rise; but, if I were you, I would keep my eyes very much on the Count of Ferroll, for, depend on it, he is one of those men who sooner or later will make a noise in the world.'

Adriana came up at this moment, leaning on the arm of the Knight of the Dolphin, better known as Regy Sutton. They came from the tea-room. Endymion moved away with a cloud on his brow, murmuring to himself, 'I am quite sick of the name of the Count of Ferroll.'

The jousting-ground was about a mile from the castle, and though it was nearly encircled by vast and lofty galleries, it was impossible that accommodation could be afforded on this spot to the thousands who had repaired from many parts of the kingdom to the Montfort Tournament. But even a hundred thousand people could witness the procession from the castle to the scene of action. That was superb. The sun shone, and not one of the breathless multitude was disappointed.

There came a long line of men-at-arms and musicians and trumpeters and banner-bearers of the Lord of the Tournament, and heralds in tabards, and pursuivants, and then the Herald of the Tournament by himself, whom the people at first mistook for the Lord Mayor.

Then came the Knight Marshal on a caparisoned steed, himself in a suit of gilt armour, and in a richly-embroidered surcoat. A band of halberdiers preceded the King of the Tournament, also on a steed richly caparisoned, and himself clad in robes of

velvet and ermine, and wearing a golden crown.

Then on a barded Arab, herself dressed in cloth of gold, parti-coloured with violet and crimson, came, amidst tremendous cheering, the Queen of Beauty herself. Twelve attendants bore aloft a silken canopy, which did not conceal from the enraptured multitude the lustre of her matchless loveliness. Lady Montfort, Adriana, and four other attendant ladies, followed her majesty, two by two, each in gorgeous attire, and on a charger that vied in splendour with its mistress. Six pages followed next, in violet and silver.

The bells of a barded mule announced the Jester, who waved his sceptre with unceasing authority, and pelted the people with admirably prepared impromptus. Some in the crowd tried to enter into a competition of banter, but they were always vanquished.

Soon a large company of men-at-arms and the sounds of most triumphant music stopped the general laughter, and all became again hushed in curious suspense. The tallest and the stoutest of the Border men bore the gon-

falon of the Lord of the Tournament. That should have been Lord Montfort himself; but he had deputed the office to his cousin and presumptive heir. Lord Montfort was well represented, and the people cheered his cousin Odo heartily, as in his suit of golden armour richly chased, and bending on his steed, caparisoned in blue and gold, he acknowledged their fealty with a proud reverence.

The other knights followed in order, all attended by their esquires and their grooms. Each knight was greatly applauded, and it was really a grand sight to see them on their barded chargers and in their panoply; some in suits of engraved Milanese armour, some in German suits of fluted polished steel; some in steel armour engraved and inlaid with gold. The Black Knight was much cheered, but no one commanded more admiration than Prince Florestan, in a suit of blue damascened armour, and inlaid with silver roses.

Every procession must end. It is a pity, for there is nothing so popular with mankind.

The splendid part of the pageant had passed, but still the people gazed and looked as if they would have gazed for ever. The visitors at the castle, all in ancient costume, attracted much notice. Companies of swordsmen and bowmen followed, till at last the seneschal of the castle, with his chamberlains and servitors, closed the spell-bound scene.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE jousting was very successful; though some were necessarily discomfited, almost everyone contrived to obtain some distinction. But the two knights who excelled and vanquished everyone except themselves were the Black Knight, and the Knight of the White Rose. Their exploits were equal at the close of the first day, and on the second they were to contend for the principal prize of the tournament, for which none else were entitled to be competitors. This was a golden helm, to be placed upon the victor's brow by the Queen of Beauty.

There was both a banquet and a ball on this day, and the excitement between the adventures of the morning and the prospects of the morrow was great. The knights, freed from their armour, appeared in fanciful dresses

of many-coloured velvets. All who had taken part in the pageant retained their costumes, and the ordinary guests, if they yielded to mediæval splendour, successfully asserted the taste of Paris and its sparkling grace, in their exquisite robes, and wreaths and garlands of fantastic loveliness.

Berengaria, full of the inspiration of success, received the smiling congratulations of everybody, and repaid them with happy suggestions, which she poured forth with inexhaustible yet graceful energy. The only person who had a gloomy air was Endymion. She rallied him. 'I shall call you the Knight of the Woeful Countenance if you approach me with such a visage. What can be the matter with you?'

'Nothing,' said Endymion in a tone of sullen misery.

'There is something. I know your countenance too well to be deceived. What is the matter?'

'Nothing,' repeated Endymion, looking rather away.

The Knight of the Dolphin came up and

said, 'This is a critical affair to-morrow, my dear Lady Montfort. If the Count of Ferroll is discomfited by the prince, it may be a *casus belli*. You ought to get Lord Roehampton to interfere and prevent the encounter.'

'The Count of Ferroll will not be discomfited,' said Lady Montfort. 'He is one of those men who never fail.'

'Well, I do not know,' said the Knight of the Dolphin musingly. 'The prince has a stout lance, and I have felt it.'

'He had the best of it this morning,' said Endymion rather bitterly. 'Everyone thought so, and that it was very fortunate for the Count of Ferroll that the heralds closed the lists.'

'It might have been fortunate for others,' rejoined Lady Montfort. 'What is the general opinion?' she added, addressing the Knight of the Dolphin. 'Do not go away, Mr. Ferrars. I want to give you some directions about to-morrow.'

'I do not think I shall be at the place to-morrow,' muttered Endymion.

'What!' exclaimed Berengaria; but at

this moment Mr. Sidney Wilton came up and said, 'I have been looking at the golden helm. It is entrusted to my care as King of the Tournament. It is really so beautiful, that I think I shall usurp it.'

'You will have to settle that with the Count of Ferroll,' said Berengaria.

'The betting is about equal,' said the Knight of the Dolphin.

'Well, we must have some gloves upon it,' said Berengaria.

Endymion walked away.

He walked away, and the first persons that met his eye were the prince and the Count of Ferroll in conversation. It was sickening. They seemed quite gay, and occasionally examined together a paper which the prince held in his hand, and which was an official report by the heralds of the day's jousting. This friendly conversation might apparently have gone on for ever had not the music ceased and the count been obliged to seek his partner for the coming dance.

'I wonder you can speak to him,' said Endymion, going up to the prince. 'If the

heralds had not—many think, too hastily—closed the lists this morning, you would have been the victor of the day.'

'My dear child! what can you mean?' said the prince. 'I believe everything was closed quite properly, and, as for myself, I am entirely satisfied with my share of the day's success.'

'If you had thrown him,' said Endymion, 'he could not with decency have contended for the golden helm.'

'Oh! that is what you deplore,' said the prince. 'The Count of Ferroll and I shall have to contend for many things more precious than golden helms before we die.'

'I believe he is a very overrated man,' said Endymion.

'Why?' said the prince.

'I detest him,' said Endymion.

'That is certainly a reason why *you* should not overrate him,' said the prince.

'There seems a general conspiracy to run him up,' said Endymion with pique.

'The Count of Ferroll is the man of the future,' said the prince calmly.

'That is what Mr. Neuchatel said to me yesterday. I suppose he caught it from you.'

'It is an advantage, a great advantage, for me to observe the Count of Ferroll in this intimate society,' said the prince, speaking slowly, 'perhaps even to fathom him. But I am not come to that yet. He is a man neither to love nor to detest. He has himself an intelligence superior to all passion, I might say all feeling; and if, in dealing with such a being, we ourselves have either, we give him an advantage.'

'Well, all the same I hope you will win the golden helm to-morrow,' said Endymion, looking a little perplexed.

'The golden casque that I am ordained to win,' said the prince, 'is not at Montfort Castle. This, after all, is but Mambrino's helmet.'

A knot of young dandies were discussing the chances of the morrow as Endymion was passing by, and as he knew most of them he joined the group.

'I hope to heaven,' said one, 'that the

Count of Ferroll will beat that foreign chap to-morrow; I hate foreigners.'

'So do I,' said a second, and there was a general murmur of assent.

'The Count of Ferroll is as much a foreigner as the prince' said Endymion rather sharply.

'Oh! I don't call him a foreigner at all,' said the first speaker. 'He is a great favourite at White's; no one rides cross country like him, and he is a deuced fine shot in the bargain.'

'I will back Prince Florestan against him either in field or cover,' said Endymion.

'Well, I don't know your friend,' said the young gentleman contemptuously, 'so I cannot bet.'

'I am sure your friend, Lady Montfort, my dear Dymy, will back the Count of Ferroll,' lisped a third young gentleman.

This completed the programme of mortification, and Endymion hot, and then cold, and then both at the same time, bereft of repartee, and wishing the earth would open and Montfort Castle disappear in

its convulsed bosom, stole silently away as soon as practicable, and wandered as far as possible from the music and the bursts of revelry.

These conversations had taken place in the chief saloon, which was contiguous to the ball-room and which was nearly as full of guests. Endymion, moving in the opposite direction, entered another drawing-room, where the population was sparse. It consisted of couples apparently deeply interested in each other. Some faces were radiant, and some pensive, and a little agitated, but they all agreed in one expression, that they took no interest whatever in the solitary Endymion. Even their whispered words were hushed as he passed by, and they seemed, with their stony, unsympathising glance, to look upon him as upon some inferior being who had intruded into their paradise. In short, Endymion felt all that embarrassment, mingled with a certain portion of self-contempt, which attends the conviction that we are what is delicately called *de trop*.

He advanced and took refuge in another

room, where there was only a single, and still more engrossed pair; but this was even more intolerable to him. Shrinking from a return to the hostile chamber he had just left, he made a frantic rush forward with affected ease and alacrity, and found himself alone in the favourite morning room of Lady Montfort.

He threw himself on a sofa and hid his face in his hand, and gave a sigh, which was almost a groan. He was sick at heart; his extremities were cold, his brain was feeble. All hope, and truly all thought of the future, deserted him. He remembered only the sorrowful, or the humiliating, chapters in his life. He wished he had never left Hurstley. He wished he had been apprenticed to Farmer Thornberry, that he had never quitted his desk at Somerset House, and never known more of life than Joe's and the divan. All was vanity and vexation of spirit. He contemplated finishing his days in the neighbouring stream, in which, but a few days ago, he was bathing in health and joy.

Time flew on; he was unconscious of its

course; no one entered the room, and he wished never to see a human face again, when a voice sounded and he heard his name.

'Endymion!'

He looked up; it was Lady Montfort. He did not speak, but gave her, perhaps unconsciously, a glance of reproach and despair.

'What is the matter with you?' she said.

'Nothing.'

'That is nonsense. Something must have happened. I have missed you so long, but was determined to find you. Have you a headache?'

'No.'

'Come back; come back with me. It is so odd. My lord has asked for you twice.'

'I want to see no one.'

'Oh! but this is absurd—and on a day like this, when everything has been so successful and everyone is so happy.'

'I am not happy, and I am not successful.'

'You perfectly astonish me,' said Lady Montfort; 'I shall begin to believe that you

have not so sweet a temper as I always supposed.'

'It matters not what my temper is.'

'I think it matters a great deal. I like, above all things, to live with good-tempered people.'

'I hope you may not be disappointed. My temper is my own affair, and I am content always to be alone.'

'Why! you are talking nonsense, Endymion.'

'Probably; I do not pretend to be gifted. I am not one of those gentlemen who cannot fail. I am not the man of the future.'

'Well! I never was so surprised in my life,' exclaimed Lady Montfort. 'I never will pretend to form an opinion of human character again. Now, my dear Endymion, rouse yourself, and come back with me. Give me your arm. I cannot stay another moment; I dare say I have already been wanted a thousand times.'

'I cannot go back,' said Endymion; 'I never wish to see anybody again. If you want an arm, there is the Count of Ferroll,

and I hope you may find he has a sweeter temper than I have.'

Lady Montfort looked at him with a strange and startled glance. It was a mixture of surprise, a little disdain, some affection blended with mockery. And then exclaiming 'Silly boy!' she swept out of the room.

CHAPTER XXV.

'I DO not like the prospect of affairs,' said Mr. Sidney Wilton to Endymion as they were posting up to London from Montfort Castle; a long journey, but softened in those days by many luxuries, and they had much to talk about.

'The decline of the revenue is not fitful; it is regular. Our people are too apt to look at the state of the revenue merely in a financial point of view. If a surplus, take off taxes; if a deficiency, put them on. But the state of the revenue should also be considered as the index of the condition of the population. According to my impression, the condition of the people is declining; and why? because they are less employed. If this spreads, they will become discontented and disaffected, and I cannot help remembering,

that, if they become troublesome, it is our office that will have to deal with them.'

'This bad harvest is a great misfortune,' said Endymion.

'Yes, but a bad harvest, though unquestionably a great, perhaps the greatest, misfortune for this country, is not the entire solution of our difficulties—I would say, our coming difficulties. A bad harvest touches the whole of our commercial system: it brings us face to face with the corn laws. I wish our chief would give his mind to that subject. I believe a moderate fixed duty of about twelve shillings a quarter would satisfy everyone, and nothing then could shake this country.'

Endymion listened with interest to other views of his master, who descanted on them at much length. Private secretaries know everything about their chiefs, and Endymion was not ignorant that among many of the great houses of the Whig party, and indeed among the bulk of what was called 'the Liberal' party generally, Mr. Sidney Wilton was looked upon, so far as economical questions were concerned, as very crotchety, in-

deed a dangerous character. Lord Montfort was the only magnate who was entirely opposed to the corn laws, but then, as Berengaria would remark, 'Simon is against all laws; he is not a practical man.'

Mr. Sidney Wilton reverted to these views more than once in the course of their journey. 'I was not alarmed about the Chartists last year. Political trouble in this country never frightens me. Insurrections and riots strengthen an English government; they gave a new lease even to Lord Liverpool when his ministry was most feeble and unpopular; but economical discontent is quite another thing. The moment sedition arises from taxation, or want of employment, it is more dangerous and more difficult to deal with in this country than any other.'

'Lord Roehampton seemed to take rather a sanguine view of the situation after the Bed-Chamber business in the spring,' observed Endymion rather in an inquiring than a dogmatic spirit.

'Lord Roehampton has other things to think of,' said Mr. Wilton. 'He is absorbed,

and naturally absorbed, in his department, the most important in the state, and of which he is master. But I am obliged to look at affairs nearer home. Now, this Anti-Corn-Law League, which they established last year at Manchester, and which begins to be very busy, though nobody at present talks of it, is, in my mind, a movement which ought to be watched. I tell you what; it occurred to me more than once during that wondrous pageant, that we have just now been taking part in; the government wants better information than they have as to the state of the country, the real feelings and condition of the bulk of the population. We used to sneer at the Tories for their ignorance of these matters, but after all, we, like them, are mainly dependent on quarter sessions; on the judgment of a lord-lieutenant and the statistics of a bench of magistrates. It is true we have introduced into our subordinate administration at Whitehall some persons who have obtained the reputation of distinguished economists, and we allow them to guide us. But though ingenious men, no doubt, they are chiefly bankrupt

tradesmen, who, not having been able to manage their own affairs, have taken upon themselves to advise on the conduct of the country—pedants and prigs at the best, and sometimes impostors. No ; this won't do. It is useless to speak to the chief ; I did about the Anti-Corn-Law League ; he shrugged his shoulders, and said it was a madness that would pass. I have made up my mind to send somebody, quite privately, to the great scenes of national labour. He must be somebody whom nobody knows, and nobody suspects of being connected with the administration, or we shall never get the truth—and the person I have fixed upon is yourself.'

'But am I equal to such a task ?' said Endymion modestly, but sincerely.

'I think so,' said Mr. Wilton, 'or, of course, I would not have fixed upon you. I want a fresh and virgin intelligence to observe and consider the country. It must be a mind free from prejudice, yet fairly informed on the great questions involved in the wealth of nations. I know you have read Adam Smith, and not lightly. Well, he is the best guide,

though of course we must adapt his principles to the circumstances with which we have to deal. You have good judgment, great industry, a fairly quick perception, little passion—perhaps hardly enough ; but that is probably the consequence of the sorrows and troubles of early life. But after all, there is no education like adversity.'

'If it will only cease at the right time,' said Endymion.

'Well, in that respect, I do not think you have anything to complain of,' said Mr. Wilton. 'The world is all before you, and I mistake if you do not rise. Perseverance and tact are the two qualities most valuable for all men who would mount, but especially for those who have to step out of the crowd. I am sure no one can say you are not assiduous, but I am glad always to observe that you have tact. Without tact you can learn nothing. Tact teaches you when to be silent. Inquirers who are always inquiring never learn anything.'

CHAPTER XXVI.

LANCASHIRE was not so wonderful a place forty years ago as it is at present, but, compared then with the rest of England, it was infinitely more striking. For a youth like Endymion, born and bred in our southern counties, the Berkshire downs varied by the bustle of Pall-Mall and the Strand—Lancashire with its teeming and toiling cities, its colossal manufactories and its gigantic chimneys, its roaring engines and its flaming furnaces, its tramroads and its railroads, its coal and its cotton, offered a far greater contrast to the scenes in which he had hitherto lived, than could be furnished by almost any country of the European continent.

Endymion felt it was rather a crisis in his life, and that his future might much depend on the fulfilment of the confidential office

which had been entrusted to him by his chief. He summoned all his energies, concentrated his intelligence on the one subject, and devoted to its study and comprehension every moment of his thought and time. After a while, he had made Manchester his head-quarters. It was even then the centre of a network of railways, and gave him an easy command of the contiguous districts.

Endymion had more than once inquired after the Anti-Corn-Law League, but had not as yet been so fortunate as to attend any of their meetings. They were rarer then than they afterwards soon became, and the great manufacturers did not encourage them. 'I do not like extreme views,' said one of the most eminent one day to Endymion. 'In my opinion we should always avoid extremes;' and he paused and looked around, as if he had enunciated a heaven-born truth, and for the first time. 'I am a liberal; so we all are here. I supported Lord Grey, and I support Lord Melbourne, and I am, in everything, for a liberal policy. I don't like extremes. A wise minister should take off the duty on cotton

wool. That is what the country really wants, and then everybody would be satisfied. No; I know nothing about this league you ask about, and I do not know anyone—that is to say, anyone respectable—who does. They came to me to lend my name. "No," I said, "gentlemen; I feel much honoured, but I do not like extremes;" and they went away. They are making a little more noise now, because they have got a man who has the gift of the gab, and the people like to go and hear him speak. But as I said to a friend of mine, who seemed half inclined to join them, 'Well; if I did anything of that sort, I would be led by a Lancashire lad. They have got a foreigner to lead them, a fellow out of Berkshire; an agitator—and only a print-work after all. No; that will never do.'

Notwithstanding these views, which Endymion found very generally entertained by the new world in which he mixed, he resolved to take the earliest opportunity of attending the meeting of the league, and it soon arrived.

It was an evening meeting, so that workmen—or the operatives, as they were styled in this part of the kingdom—should be able to attend. The assembly took place in a large but temporary building; very well adapted to the human voice, and able to contain even thousands. It was fairly full to-night; and the platform, on which those who took a part in the proceedings, or who, by their comparatively influential presence, it was supposed, might assist the cause, was almost crowded.

'He is going to speak to-night,' said an operative to Endymion. 'That is why there is such an attendance.'

Remembering Mr. Wilton's hint about not asking unnecessary questions which often arrest information, Endymion did not inquire who 'he' was; and to promote communication merely observed, 'A fine speaker, then, I conclude?'

'Well, he is in a way,' said the operative. 'He has not got Hollaballoo's voice, but he knows what he is talking about. I doubt their getting what they are after; they have

not the working classes with them. If they went against truck, it would be something.'

The chairman opened the proceedings; but was coldly received, though he spoke sensibly and at some length. He then introduced a gentleman, who was absolutely an alderman, to move a resolution condemnatory of the corn laws. The august position of the speaker atoned for his halting rhetoric, and a city which had only just for the first time been invested with municipal privileges was hushed before a man who might in time even become a mayor.

Then the seconder advanced, and there was a general burst of applause.

'There he is,' said the operative to Endymion; 'you see they like him. Oh, Job knows how to do it!'

Endymion listened with interest, soon with delight, soon with a feeling of exciting and not unpleasing perplexity, to the orator; for he was an orator, though then unrecognised, and known only in his district. He was a pale and slender man, with a fine brow and

an eye that occasionally flashed with the fire of a creative mind. His voice certainly was not like Hollaballoo's. It was rather thin, but singularly clear. There was nothing clearer except his meaning. Endymion never heard a case stated with such pellucid art; facts marshalled with such vivid simplicity, and inferences so natural and spontaneous and irresistible, that they seemed, as it were, borrowed from his audience, though none of that audience had arrived at them before. The meeting was hushed, was rapt in intellectual delight, for they did not give the speaker the enthusiasm of their sympathy. That was not shared, perhaps, by the moiety of those who listened to him. When his case was fairly before them, the speaker dealt with his opponents—some in the press, some in parliament—with much power of sarcasm, but this power was evidently rather repressed than allowed to run riot. What impressed Endymion as the chief quality of this remarkable speaker was his persuasiveness, and he had the air of being too prudent to offend even an opponent unnecessarily. His lan-

guage, though natural and easy, was choice and refined. He was evidently a man who had read, and not a little ; and there was no taint of vulgarity, scarcely a provincialism, in his pronunciation.

He spoke for rather more than an hour ; and frequently during this time, Endymion, notwithstanding his keen interest in what was taking place, was troubled, it might be disturbed, by pictures and memories of the past that he endeavoured in vain to drive away. When the orator concluded, amid cheering much louder than that which had first greeted him, Endymion, in a rather agitated voice, whispered to his neighbour, 'Tell me—is his name Thornberry ?'

'That is your time of day,' said the operative. 'Job Thornberry is his name, and I am on his works.'

'And yet you do not agree with him ?'

'Well ; I go as far as he goes, but he does not go so far as I go ; that's it.'

'I do not see how a man can go much farther,' said Endymion. 'Where are his works ? I knew your master when he was in

the south of England, and I should like to call on him.'

'My employer,' said the operative. 'They call themselves masters, but we do not. I will tell you. His works are a mile out of town; but it seems only a step, for there are houses all the way. Job Thornberry & Co.'s. Print-works, Pendleton Road—anyone can guide you—and when you get there, you can ask for me, if you like. I am his overlooker, and my name is ENOCH CRAGGS.'

CHAPTER XXVII.

'You are not much altered,' said Thornberry, as he retained Endymion's hand, and he looked at him earnestly; 'and yet you have become a man. I suppose I am ten years your senior. I have never been back to the old place, and yet I sometimes think I should like to be buried there. The old man has been here, and more than once, and liked it well enough; at least, I hope so. He told me a good deal about you all; some sorrows, and, I hope, some joys. I heard of Miss Myra's marriage; she was a sweet young lady; the gravest person I ever knew; I never knew her smile. I remember they thought her proud, but I always had a fancy for her. Well; she has married a topsawyer—I believe the ablest of them all, and probably the most unprincipled; though I ought not to say that to you. However, public

men are spoken freely of. I wish to heaven you would get him to leave off tinkering those commercial treaties that he is always making such a fuss about. More pernicious nonsense was never devised by man than treaties of commerce. However, their precious most favoured nation clause will break down the whole concern yet. But you wish to see the works; I will show them to you myself. There is not much going on now, and the stagnation increases daily. And then, if you are willing, we will go home and have a bit of lunch—I live hard by. My best works are my wife and children: I have made that joke before, as you can well fancy.'

This was the greeting, sincere but not unkind, of Job Thornberry to Endymion on the day after the meeting of the Anti-Corn-Law League. To Endymion it was an interesting, and, as he believed it would prove, a useful encounter.

The print-works were among the most considerable of their kind at Manchester, but they were working now with reduced numbers and at half time. It was the energy and the

taste and invention of Thornberry that had given them their reputation, and secured them extensive markets. He had worked with borrowed capital, but had paid off his debt, and his establishment was now his own; but, stimulated by his success, he had made a consignment of large amount to the United States, where it arrived only to be welcomed by what was called the American crash.

Turning from the high road, a walk of half a mile brought them to a little world of villas; varying in style and size, but all pretty, and each in its garden. 'And this is my home,' said Thornberry, opening the wicket, 'and here is my mistress and the young folks'—pointing to a pretty woman, but with an expression of no inconsiderable self-confidence, and with several children clinging to her dress and hiding their faces at the unexpected sight of a stranger. 'My eldest is a boy, but he is at school,' said Thornberry. 'I have named him, after one of the greatest men that ever lived, John Hampden.'

'He was a landed proprietor,' observed

Endymion, rather drily; 'and a considerable one.'

'I have brought an old friend to take cheer with us,' continued Thornberry; 'one whom I knew before any here present; so show your faces, little people;' and he caught up one of the children, a fair child like its mother, long-haired and blushing like a Worcestershire orchard before harvest time. 'Tell the gentleman what you are.'

'A free-trader,' murmured the infant.

Within the house were several shelves of books well selected, and the walls were adorned with capital prints of famous works of art. 'They are chiefly what are called books of reference,' said Thornberry, as Endymion was noticing his volumes; 'but I have not much room, and, to tell you the truth, they are not merely books of reference to me—I like reading encyclopædias. The 'Dictionary of Dates' is a favourite book of mine. The mind sometimes wants tone, and then I read Milton. He is the only poet I read—he is complete, and is enough. I have got his prose works too. Milton was the greatest of Englishmen.'

The repast was simple, but plenteous, and nothing could be neater than the manner in which it was served.

'We are teetotalers,' said Thornberry; 'but we can give you a good cup of coffee.'

'I am a teetotaler too at this time of the day,' said Endymion; 'but a good cup of coffee is, they say, the most delicious and the rarest beverage in the world.'

'Well,' continued Thornberry; 'it is a long time since we met, Mr. Ferrars—ten years. I used to think that in ten years one might do anything; and a year ago, I really thought I had done it; but the accursed laws of this blessed country, as it calls itself, have nearly broken me, as they have broken many a better man before me.'

'I am sorry to hear this,' said Endymion; 'I trust it is but a passing cloud.'

'It is not a cloud,' said Thornberry; 'it is a storm, a tempest, a wreck—but not only for me. Your great relative, my Lord Roehampton, must look to it, I can tell you that. What is happening in this country, and is about to happen, will not be cured or

averted by commercial treaties—mark my words.'

'But what would cure it?' said Endymion.

'There is only one thing that can cure this country, and it will soon be too late for that. We must have free exchange.'

'Free exchange!' murmured Endymion, thoughtfully.

'Why, look at this,' said Thornberry. 'I had been driving a capital trade with the States for nearly five years. I began with nothing, as you know. I had paid off all my borrowed capital; my works were my own, and this house is a freehold. A year ago I sent to my correspondent at New York the largest consignment of goods I had ever made and the best, and I cannot get the slightest return for them. My correspondent writes to me that there is no end of corn and breadstuffs which he could send, if we could only receive them; but he knows very well he might as well try and send them to the moon. The people here are starving and want these breadstuffs, and they are ready to pay for them by

the products of their labour—and your blessed laws prevent them !'

'But these laws did not prevent your carrying on a thriving trade with America for five years, according to your own account,' said Endymion. 'I do not question what you say ; I am asking only for information.'

'What you say is fairly said, and it has been said before,' replied Thornberry ; 'but there is nothing in it. We had a trade, and a thriving trade, with the States ; though, to be sure, it was always fitful and ought to have been ten times as much, even during those five years. But the fact is, the state of affairs in America was then exceptional. They were embarked in great public works in which everyone was investing his capital ; shares and stocks abounded, and they paid us for our goods with them.'

'Then it would rather seem that they have no capital now to spare to purchase our goods ?'

'Not so,' said Thornberry, sharply, 'as I have shown ; but were it so, it does not affect my principle. If there were free ex-

change, we should find employment and compensation in other countries, even if the States were logged, which I don't believe thirty millions of people with boundless territory ever can be.'

'But after all,' said Endymion, 'America is as little in favour of free exchange as we are. She may send us her bread-stuffs; but her laws will not admit our goods, except on the payment of enormous duties.'

'Pish!' said Thornberry; 'I do not care this for their enormous duties. Let me have free imports, and I will soon settle their duties.'

'To fight hostile tariffs with free imports,' said Endymion; 'is not that fighting against odds?'

'Not a bit. This country has nothing to do but to consider its imports. Foreigners will not give us their products for nothing; but as for their tariffs, if we were wise men, and looked to our real interests, their hostile tariffs, as you call them, would soon be falling down like an old wall.'

'Well, I confess,' said Endymion, 'I have

for some time thought the principle of free exchange was a sound one; but its application in a country like this would be very difficult, and require, I should think, great prudence and moderation.'

'By prudence and moderation you mean ignorance and timidity,' said Thornberry, scornfully.

'Not exactly that, I hope,' said Endymion; 'but you cannot deny that the home market is a most important element in the consideration of our public wealth, and it mainly rests upon the agriculture of the country.'

'Then it rests upon a very poor foundation,' said Thornberry. 'But if any persons should be more tempted than others by free exchange, it should be the great body of the consumers of this land, who pay unjust and excessive prices for every article they require. No, my dear Mr. Ferrars; the question is a very simple one, and we may talk for ever, and we shall never alter it. The laws of this country are made by the proprietors of land, and they make them for their own benefit. A man with a large estate is said to have a

great stake in the country because some hundreds of people or so are more or less dependent on him. How has he a greater interest in the country than a manufacturer who has sunk 100,000*l.* in machinery, and has a thousand people, as I had, receiving from him weekly wages? No home market, indeed! Pah! it is an affair of rent, and nothing more or less. And England is to be ruined to keep up rents. Are you going? Well, I am glad we have met. Perhaps we shall have another talk together some day. I shall not return to the works. There is little doing there, and I must think now of other things. The subscriptions to the league begin to come in apace. Say what they like in the House of Commons and the vile London press, the thing is stirring.'

Wishing to turn the conversation a little, Endymion asked Mrs. Thornberry whether she occasionally went to London.

'Never was there,' she said, in a sharp, clear voice; 'but I hope to go soon.'

'You will have a great deal to see.'

'All I want to see, and hear, is the Rev.

Servetus Frost,' replied the lady. 'My idea of perfect happiness is to hear him every Sunday. He comes here sometimes, for his sister is settled here; a very big mill. He preached here a month ago. Should not I have liked the bishop to have heard him, that's all! But he would not dare to go; he could not answer a point.'

'My wife is of the Unitarian persuasion,' said Thornberry. 'I am not. I was born in our Church, and I keep to it; but I often go to chapel with my wife. As for religion generally, if a man believes in his Maker and does his duty to his neighbour, in my mind that is sufficient.'

Endymion bade them good-bye, and strolled musingly towards his hotel.

Just as he reached the works again, he encountered Enoch Craggs, who was walking into Manchester.

'I am going to our institute,' said Enoch. 'I do not know why, but they have put me on the committee.'

'And, I doubt not, they did very wisely,' said Endymion.

'Master Thornberry was glad to see you?' said Enoch.

'And I was glad to see him.'

'He has got the gift of speech,' said Enoch.

'And that is a great gift.'

'If wisely exercised, and I will not say he is not exercising it wisely. Certainly for his own purpose, but whether that purpose is for the general good—query?'

'He is against monopoly,' observed Endymion, inquiringly.

'Query again?' said Enoch.

'Well; he is opposed to the corn laws.'

'The corn laws are very bad laws,' said Enoch, 'and the sooner we get rid of them the better. But there are worse things than the corn laws.'

'Hem!' said Endymion.

'There are the money laws,' said Enoch.

'I did not know you cared so much about them at Manchester,' said Endymion. 'I thought it was Birmingham that was chiefly interested about currency.'

'I do not care one jot about currency,'

said Enoch; 'and, so far as I can judge, the Birmingham chaps talk a deal of nonsense about the matter. Leastwise, they will never convince me that a slip of irredeemable paper is as good as the young queen's head on a twenty-shilling piece. I mean the laws that secure the accumulation of capital, by which means the real producers become mere hirelings, and really are little better than slaves.'

'But surely without capital we should all of us be little better than slaves?'

'I am not against capital,' replied Enoch. 'What I am against is capitalists.'

'But if we get rid of capitalists we shall soon get rid of capital.'

'No, no,' said Enoch, with his broad accent, shaking his head, and with a laughing eye. 'Master Thornberry has been telling you that. He is the most inveterate capitalist of the whole lot; and I always say, though they keep aloof from him at present, they will be all sticking to his skirts before long. Master Thornberry is against the capitalists in land; but there are other capitalists nearer home, and I know more about them. I was

reading a book the other day about King Charles—Charles the First, whose head they cut off—I am very liking to that time, and read a good deal about it; and there was Lord Falkland, a great gentleman in those days, and he said, when Archbishop Laud was trying on some of his priestly tricks, that "if he were to have a pope, he would rather the pope were at Rome than at Lambeth." So I sometimes think, if we are to be ruled by capitalists, I would sooner, perhaps, be ruled by gentlemen of estate, who have been long among us, than by persons who build big mills, who come from God knows where, and, when they have worked their millions out of our flesh and bone, go God knows where. But perhaps we shall get rid of them all some day—landlords and mill-lords.'

'And whom will you substitute for them?'

'The producers,' said Enoch, with a glance half savage, half triumphant.

'What can workmen do without capital?'

'Why, they make the capital,' said Enoch; 'and if they make the capital, is it not strange

that they should not be able to contrive some means to keep the capital? Why, Job was saying the other day that there was nothing like a principle to work upon. It would carry all before it. So say I. And I have a principle too, though it is not Master Thornberry's. But it will carry all before it, though it may not be in my time. But I am not so sure of that.'

'And what is it?' asked Endymion.

'CO-OPERATION.'

CHAPTER XXVIII.

This strangely-revived acquaintance with Job Thornberry was not an unfruitful incident in the life of Endymion. Thornberry was a man of original mind and singular energy; and, although of extreme views on commercial subjects, all his conclusions were founded on extensive and various information, combined with no inconsiderable practice. The mind of Thornberry was essentially a missionary one. He was always ready to convert people; and he acted with ardour and interest on a youth who, both by his ability and his social position, was qualified to influence opinion. But this youth was gifted with a calm, wise judgment, of the extent and depth of which he was scarcely conscious himself; and Thornberry, like all propagandists, was more remarkable for his zeal and his convictions, than for that

observation and perception of character which are the finest elements in the management of men and affairs.

'What you should do,' said Thornberry, one day, to Endymion, 'is to go to Scotland; go to the Glasgow district; that city itself, and Paisley, and Kilmarnock—keep your eye on Paisley. I am much mistaken if there will not soon be a state of things there which alone will break up the whole concern. It will burst it, sir; it will burst it.'

So Endymion, without saying anything, quietly went to Glasgow and its district, and noted enough to make him resolve soon to visit there again; but the cabinet reassembled in the early part of November, and he had to return to his duties.

In his leisure hours, Endymion devoted himself to the preparation of a report, for Mr. Sidney Wilton, on the condition and prospects of the manufacturing districts of the north of England, with some illustrative reference to that of the country beyond the Tweed. He concluded it before Christmas, and Mr. Wilton took it down with him to Gaydene, to study

it at his leisure. Endymion passed his holidays with Lord and Lady Montfort, at their southern seat, Princedown.

Endymion spoke to Lady Montfort a little about his labours, for he had no secrets from her; but she did not much sympathise with him, though she liked him to be sedulous and to distinguish himself. 'Only,' she observed, 'take care not to be *doctrinaire*, Endymion. I am always afraid of that with you. It is Sidney's fault; he always was *doctrinaire*. It was a great thing for you becoming his private secretary; to be the private secretary of a cabinet minister is a real step in life, and I shall always be most grateful to Sidney, whom I love for appointing you; but still, if I could have had my wish, you should have been Lord Roehampton's private secretary. That is real politics, and he is a real statesman. You must not let Mr. Wilton mislead you about the state of affairs in the cabinet. The cabinet consists of the prime minister and Lord Roehampton, and, if they are united, all the rest is vapour. And they will not consent to any nonsense about touching the corn laws; you

may be sure of that. Besides, I will tell you a secret, which is not yet Pulchinello's secret, though I dare say it will be known when we all return to town—we shall have a great event when parliament meets; a royal marriage. What think you of that? The young queen is going to be married, and to a young prince, like a prince in a fairy tale. As Lord Roehampton wrote to me this morning, "Our royal marriage will be much more popular than the Anti-Corn-Law League."'

The royal marriage was very popular; but, unfortunately, it reflected no splendour on the ministry. The world blessed the queen and cheered the prince, but shook its head at the government. Sir Robert Peel also—whether from his own motive or the irresistible impulse of his party need not now be inquired into—sanctioned a direct attack on the government, in the shape of a vote of want of confidence in them, immediately the court festivities were over, and the attack was defeated by a narrow majority.

'Nothing could be more unprincipled,' said Berengaria, 'after he had refused to take

office last year. As for our majority, it is, under such circumstances, twenty times more than we want. As Lord Roehampton says, one is enough.'

Trade and revenue continued to decline. There was again the prospect of a deficiency. The ministry, too, was kept in by the Irish vote, and the Irish then were very unpopular. The cabinet itself generally was downcast, and among themselves occasionally murmured a regret that they had not retired when the opportunity offered in the preceding year. Berengaria, however, would not bate an inch of confidence and courage. 'You think too much,' she said to Endymion, 'of trade and finance. Trade always comes back, and finance never ruined a country, or an individual either if he had pluck. Mr. Sidney Wilton is a croaker. The things he fears will never happen; or, if they do, will turn out to be unimportant. Look to Lord Roehampton; he is the man. He does not care a rush whether the revenue increases or declines. He is thinking of real politics: foreign affairs; maintaining our power in Europe. Some-

thing will happen, before the session is over, in the Mediterranean;' and she pressed her finger to her lip, and then she added, 'The country will support Lord Roehampton, as they supported Pitt, and give him any amount of taxes that he likes.'

In the meantime, the social world had its incidents as well as the political, and not less interesting. One of the most insignificant, perhaps, was the introduction into society of the Countess of Beaumaris. Her husband, sacrificing even his hunting, had come up to town at the meeting of parliament, and received his friends in a noble mansion on Piccadilly Terrace. All its equipments were sumptuous and refined, and everything had been arranged under the personal supervision of Mr. Waldershare. They commenced very quietly; dinners little but constant, and graceful and finished as a banquet of Watteau. No formal invitations; men were brought in to dinner from the House of Lords 'just up,' or picked up, as it were carelessly, in the House of Commons by Mr. Waldershare, or were asked by Imogene, at a dozen hours'

notice, in billets of irresistible simplicity. Soon it was whispered about, that the thing to do was to dine with Beaumaris, and that Lady Beaumaris was 'something too delightful.' Prince Florestan frequently dined there; Waldershare always there, in a state of coruscation; and every man of fashion in the opposite ranks, especially if they had brains.

Then, in a little time, it was gently hoped that Imogene should call on their wives and mothers, or their wives and mothers call on her; and then she received, without any formal invitation, twice a week; and as there was nothing going on in London, or nothing half so charming, everybody who was anybody came to Piccadilly Terrace; and so as, after long observation, a new planet is occasionally discovered by a philosopher, thus society suddenly and indubitably discovered that there was at last a Tory house.

Lady Roehampton, duly apprised of affairs by her brother, had called on Lord and Lady Beaumaris, and had invited them to her house. It was the first appearance of Imogene in general society, and it was successful. Her

large brown eyes, and long black lashes, her pretty mouth and dimple, her wondrous hair—which, it was whispered, unfolded, touched the ground—struck everyone, and the dignified simplicity of her carriage was attractive. Her husband never left her side ; while Mr. Waldershare was in every part of the saloons, watching her from distant points, to see how she got on, or catching the remarks of others on her appearance. Myra was kind to her as well as courteous, and, when the stream of arriving guests had somewhat ceased, sought her out and spoke to her ; and then put her arm in hers, walked with her for a moment, and introduced her to one or two great personages, who had previously intimated their wish or their consent to that effect. Lady Montfort was not one of these. When parties are equal, and the struggle for power is intense, society loses much of its sympathy and softness. Lady Montfort could endure the presence of Tories, provided they were her kinsfolk, and would join, even at their houses, in traditionary festivities ; but she shrank from passing the line, and at once had a prejudice

against Imogene, who she instinctively felt might become a power for the enemy.

'I will not have you talk so much to that Lady Beaumaris,' she said to Endymion.

'She is an old friend of mine,' he replied.

'How could you have known her? She was a shop-girl, was not she, or something of that sort?'

'She and her family were very kind to me when I was not much better than a shop-boy myself,' replied Endymion, with a mantling cheek. 'They are most respectable people, and I have a great regard for her.'

'Indeed! Well; I will not keep you from your Tory woman,' said Berengaria, rudely; and she walked away.

Altogether, this season of '40 was not a very satisfactory one in any respect, as regarded society or the country in general. Party passion was at its highest. The ministry retained office almost by a casting vote; were frequently defeated on important questions; and whenever a vacancy occurred, it was filled by their opponents. Their unpopularity increased daily, and it was stimu-

lated by the general distress. All that Job Thornberry had predicted as to the state of manufacturing Scotland duly occurred. Besides manufacturing distress, they had to encounter a series of bad harvests. Never was a body of statesmen placed in a more embarrassing and less enviable position. There was a prevalent, though unfounded, conviction that they were maintained in power by a combination of court favour with Irish sedition.

Lady Montfort and Lord Roehampton were the only persons who never lost heart. She was defiant; and he ever smiled, at least in public. 'What nonsense!' she would say. 'Mr. Sidney Wilton talks about the revenue falling off! As if the revenue could ever really fall off! And then our bad harvests. Why, that is the very reason we shall have an excellent harvest this year. You cannot go on always having bad harvests. Besides, good harvests never make a ministry popular. Nobody thanks a ministry for a good harvest. What makes a ministry popular is some great *coup* in foreign affairs.'

Amid all these exciting disquietudes, En-

dymion pursued a life of enjoyment, but also of observation and much labour. He lived more and more with the Montforts, but the friendship of Berengaria was not frivolous. Though she liked him to be seen where he ought to figure, and required a great deal of attention herself, she ever impressed on him that his present life was only a training for a future career, and that his mind should ever be fixed on the attainment of a high position. Particularly she impressed on him the importance of being a linguist. 'There will be a reaction some day from all this political economy,' she would say, 'and then there will be no one ready to take the helm.' Endymion was not unworthy of the inspiring interest which Lady Montfort took in him. The terrible vicissitudes of his early years had gravely impressed his character. Though ambitious, he was prudent; and, though born to please and be pleased, he was sedulous and self-restrained. Though naturally deeply interested in the fortunes of his political friends, and especially of Lord Roehampton and Mr. Wilton, a careful scrutiny of existing circum-

stances had prepared him for an inevitable change; and, remembering what was their position but a few years back, he felt that his sister and himself should be reconciled to their altered lot, and be content. She would still be a peeress, and the happy wife of an illustrious man; and he himself, though he would have to relapse into the drudgery of a public office, would meet duties the discharge of which was once the object of his ambition, coupled now with an adequate income and with many friends.

And among those friends, there were none with whom he maintained his relations more intimately than with the Neuchatels. He was often their guest both in town and at Hainault, and he met them frequently in society, always at the receptions of Lady Montfort and his sister. Zenobia used sometimes to send him a card; but these condescending recognitions of late had ceased, particularly as the great dame heard he was 'always at that Lady Beaumaris's.' One of the social incidents of his circle, not the least interesting to him, was the close attendance of

Adriana and her mother on the ministrations of Nigel Penruddock. They had become among the most devoted of his flock; and this, too, when the rapid and startling development of his sacred offices had so alarmed the easy, though sagacious, Lord Roehampton, that he had absolutely expressed his wish to Myra that she should rarely attend them, and, indeed, gradually altogether drop a habit which might ultimately compromise her. Berengaria had long ago quitted him. This was attributed to her reputed caprice, yet it was not so. 'I like a man to be practical,' she said. 'When I asked for a deanery for him the other day, the prime minister said he could hardly make a man a dean who believed in the Real Presence.' Nigel's church, however, was more crowded than ever, and a large body of the clergy began to look upon him as the coming man.

Towards the end of the year the 'great *coup* in foreign affairs,' which Lady Montfort had long brooded over, and indeed foreseen, occurred, and took the world, who were all thinking of something else, entirely by sur-

prise. A tripartite alliance of great powers had suddenly started into life; the Egyptian host was swept from the conquered plains of Asia Minor and Syria by English blue-jackets; St. Jean d'Acre, which had baffled the great Napoleon, was bombarded and taken by a British fleet; and the whole fortunes of the world in a moment seemed changed, and permanently changed.

'I am glad it did not occur in the season,' said Zenobia. 'I really could not stand Lady Montfort if it were May.'

The ministry was elate, and their Christmas was right merrie. There seemed good cause for this. It was a triumph of diplomatic skill, national valour, and administrative energy. Myra was prouder of her husband than ever, and, amid all the excitement, he smiled on her with sunny fondness. Everybody congratulated her. She gave a little reception before the holidays, to which everybody came who was in town or passing through. Even Zenobia appeared; but she stayed a very short time, talking very rapidly. Prince Florestan paid his grave devoirs, with

a gaze which seemed always to search into Lady Roehampton's inmost heart, yet never lingering about her; and Waldershare, full of wondrous compliments and conceits, and really enthusiastic, for he ever sympathised with action; and Imogene, gorgeous with the Beaumaris sapphires; and Sidney Wilton, who kissed his hostess's hand, and Adriana, who kissed her cheek.

'I tell you what, Mr. Endymion,' said Mr. Neuchatel, 'you should make Lord Roehampton your Chancellor of the Exchequer, and then your government might perhaps go on a little.'

CHAPTER XXIX.

But, as Mr. Tadpole observed, with much originality, at the Carlton, they were dancing on a volcano. It was December, and the harvest was not yet all got in, the spring corn had never grown, and the wheat was rusty; there was, he well knew, another deficiency in the revenue, to be counted by millions; wise men shook their heads and said the trade was leaving the country, and it was rumoured that the whole population of Paisley lived on the rates.

'Lord Roehampton thinks that something must be done about the corn laws,' murmured Berengaria one day to Endymion, rather crestfallen; 'but they will try sugar and timber first. I think it all nonsense, but nonsense is sometimes necessary.'

This was the first warning of that famous

budget of 1841 which led to such vast consequences, and which, directly or indirectly, gave such a new form and colour to English politics. Sidney Wilton and his friends were at length all-powerful in the cabinet because, in reality, there was nobody to oppose them. The vessel was water-logged. The premier shrugged his shoulders; and Lord Roehampton said, 'We may as well try it, because the alternative is, we shall have to resign.'

Affairs went on badly for the ministry during the early part of the session. They were more than once in a minority, and on Irish questions, which then deeply interested the country; but they had resolved that their fate should be decided by their financial measures, and Mr. Sidney Wilton and his friends were still sanguine as to the result. On the last day of April the Chancellor of the Exchequer introduced the budget, and proposed to provide for the deficiency by reducing the protective duties on sugar and timber. A few days after, the leader of the House of Commons himself announced a change in the

corn laws, and the intended introduction of grain at various-priced duties per quarter.

Then commenced the struggle of a month. Ultimately, Sir Robert Peel himself gave notice of a resolution of want of confidence in the ministry; and after a week's debate it was carried, in an almost complete house, by a majority of one!

It was generally supposed that the ministry would immediately resign. Their new measures had not revived their popularity, and the parliament in which they had been condemned had been elected under their own advice and influence. Mr. Sidney Wilton had even told Endymion to get their papers in order; and all around the somewhat dejected private secretary there were unmistakeable signs of that fatal flitting which is peculiarly sickening to the youthful politician.

He was breakfasting in his rooms at the Albany with not a good appetite. Although he had for some time contemplated the possibility of such changes—and contemplated them, as he thought, with philosophy—when

it came to reality and practice, he found his spirit was by no means so calm, or his courage so firm, as he had counted on. The charms of office arrayed themselves before him. The social influence, the secret information, the danger, the dexterity, the ceaseless excitement, the delights of patronage which everybody affects to disregard, the power of benefiting others, and often the worthy and unknown which is a real joy — in eight-and-forty hours or so, all these, to which he had now been used for some time, and which with his plastic disposition had become a second nature, were to vanish, and probably never return. Why should they? He took the gloomiest view of the future, and his inward soul acknowledged that the man the country wanted was Peel. Why might he not govern as long as Pitt? He probably would. Peel! his father's friend! And this led to a train of painful but absorbing memories, and he sat musing and abstracted, fiddling with an idle egg-spoon.

His servant came in with a note, which he eagerly opened. It ran thus: 'I must see

you instantly. I am here in the brougham, Cork Street end. Come directly. B. M.'

Endymion had to walk up half the Albany, and marked the brougham the whole way. There was in it an eager and radiant face.

'You had better get in,' said Lady Montfort, 'for in these stirring times some of the enemy may be passing. And now,' she continued, when the door was fairly shut, 'nobody knows it, not five people. They are going to dissolve.'

'To dissolve!' exclaimed Endymion. 'Will that help us?'

'Very likely,' said Berengaria. 'We have had our share of bad luck, and now we may throw in. Cheap bread is a fine cry. Indeed it is too shocking that there should be laws which add to the price of what everybody agrees is the staff of life. But you do nothing but stare, Endymion: I thought you would be in a state of the greatest excitement!'

'I am rather stunned than excited.'

'Well; but you must not be stunned,

you must act. This is a crisis for our party, but it is something more for you. It is your climacteric. They may lose; but you must win, if you will only bestir yourself. See the whips directly, and get the most certain seat you can. Nothing must prevent your being in the new parliament.'

'I see everything to prevent it,' said Endymion. 'I have no means of getting into parliament—no means of any kind.'

'Means must be found,' said Lady Montfort. 'We cannot stop now to talk about means. That would be a mere waste of time. The thing must be done. I am now going to your sister, to consult with her. All you have got to do is to make up your mind that you will be in the next parliament, and you will succeed; for everything in this world depends upon will.'

'I think everything in this world depends upon woman,' said Endymion.

'It is the same thing,' said Berengaria.

Adriana was with Lady Roehampton when Lady Montfort was announced.

Adriana came to console; but she herself

was not without solace, for, if there were a change of government, she would see more of her friend.

'Well; I was prepared for it,' said Lady Roehampton. 'I have always been expecting something ever since what they called the Bed-Chamber Plot.'

'Well; it gave us two years,' said Lady Montfort; 'and we are not out yet.'

Here were three women, young, beautiful, and powerful, and all friends of Endymion—real friends. Property does not consist merely of parks and palaces, broad acres, funds in many forms, services of plate, and collections of pictures. The affections of the heart are property, and the sympathy of the right person is often worth a good estate.

These three charming women were cordial, and embraced each other when they met; but the conversation flagged, and the penetrating eye of Myra read in the countenance of Lady Montfort the urgent need of confidence.

'So, dearest Adriana,' said Lady Roehampton, 'we will drive out together at three

o'clock. I will call on you.' And Adriana disappeared.

'You know it?' said Lady Montfort, when they were alone. 'Of course you know it. Besides, I know you know it. What I have come about is this: your brother must be in the new parliament.'

'I have not seen him; I have not mentioned it to him,' said Myra, somewhat hesitatingly.

'I have seen him; I have mentioned it to him, said Lady Montfort, decidedly. 'He makes difficulties; there must be none. He will consult you. I came on at once that you might be prepared. No difficulty must be admitted. His future depends on it.'

'I live for his future,' said Lady Roehampton.

'He will talk to you about money. These things always cost money. As a general rule, nobody has money who ought to have it. I know dear Lord Roehampton is very kind to you; but, all his life, he never had too much money at his command; though why, I never could make out. And my lord has

always had too much money ; but I do not much care to talk to him about these affairs. The thing must be done. What is the use of diamond necklaces if you cannot help a friend into parliament? But all I want now is that you will throw no difficulties in his way. Help him, too, if you can.'

'I wish Endymion had married,' replied Myra.

'Well; I do not see how that would help affairs,' said Lady Montfort. 'Besides, I dislike married men. They are very uninteresting.'

'I mean, I wish,' said Lady Roehampton, musingly, 'that he had made a great match.'

'That is not very easy,' said Lady Montfort, 'and great matches are generally failures. All the married heiresses I have known have shipwrecked.'

'And yet it is possible to marry a heiress and love her,' said Myra.

'It is possible, but very improbable.'

'I think one might easily love the person who has just left the room.'

'Miss Neuchatel?'

'Adriana. Do not you agree with me?'

'Miss Neuchatel will never marry,' said Lady Montfort, 'unless she loses her fortune.'

'Well; do you know, I have sometimes thought that she liked Endymion? I never could encourage such a feeling; and Endymion, I am sure, would not. I wish, I almost wish,' added Lady Roehampton, trying to speak with playfulness, 'that you would use your magic influence, dear Lady Montfort, and bring it about. He would soon get into parliament then.'

'I have tried to marry Miss Neuchatel once,' said Lady Montfort, with a mantling cheek, 'and I am glad to say I did not succeed. My match-making is over.'

There was a dead silence; one of those still moments which almost seem inconsistent with life, certainly with the presence of more than one human being. Lady Roehampton seemed buried in deep thought. She was quite abstracted, her eyes fixed, and fixed upon the ground. All the history of her life passed through her brain—all the history of their lives; from the nursery to this proud

moment, proud even with all its searching anxiety. And yet the period of silence could be counted almost by seconds. Suddenly she looked up with a flushed cheek and a dazed look, and said, 'It must be done.'

Lady Montfort sprang forward with a glance radiant with hope and energy, and kissed her on both cheeks. 'Dearest Lady Roehampton,' she exclaimed, 'dearest Myra! I knew you would agree with me. Yes! it must be done.'

'You will see him perhaps before I do?' inquired Myra rather hesitatingly.

'I see him every day at the same time,' replied Lady Montfort. 'He generally walks down to the House of Commons with Mr. Wilton, and when they have answered questions, and he has got all the news of the lobby, he comes to me. I always manage to get home from my drive to give him half an hour before dinner.'

CHAPTER XXX.

Lady Montfort drove off to the private residence of the Secretary of the Treasury, who was of course in the great secret. She looked over his lists, examined his books, and seemed to have as much acquaintance with electioneering details as that wily and experienced gentleman himself. 'Is there anything I can do?' she repeatedly inquired; 'command me without compunction. Is it any use giving any parties? Can I write any letters? Can I see anybody?'

'If you could stir up my lord a little?' said the secretary inquiringly.

'Well, that is difficult,' said Lady Montfort, 'perhaps impossible. But you have all his influence, and when there is a point that presses you must let me know.'

'If he would only speak to his agents?'

said the secretary, 'but they say he will not, and he has a terrible fellow in ——shire, who I hear is one of the stewards for a dinner to Sir Robert.'

'I have stopped all that,' said Lady Montfort. 'That was Odo's doing, who is himself not very sound; full of prejudices about O'Connell, and all that stuff. But he must go with his party. You need not fear about him.'

'Well! it is a leap in the dark,' said the secretary.

'Oh! no,' said Lady Montfort, 'all will go right. A starving people must be in favour of a government who will give them bread for nothing. By the bye, there is one thing, my dear Mr. Secretary, you must remember. I must have one seat, a certain seat, reserved for my nomination.'

'A certain seat in these days is a rare gem,' said the secretary.

'Yes, but I must have it nevertheless,' said Lady Montfort. 'I don't care about the cost or the trouble—but it must be certain'

Then she went home and wrote a line to Endymion, to tell him that it was all settled, that she had seen his sister, who agreed with her that it must be done, and that she had called on the Secretary of the Treasury, and had secured a certain seat. 'I wish you could come to luncheon,' she added, 'but I suppose that is impossible; you are always so busy. Why were you not in the Foreign Office? I am now going to call on the Tory women to see how they look, but I shall be at home a good while before seven, and of course count on seeing you.'

In the meantime, Endymion by no means shared the pleasurable excitement of his fair friend. His was an agitated walk from the Albany to Whitehall, where he resumed his duties moody and disquieted. There was a large correspondence this morning, which was a distraction and a relief, until the bell of Mr. Sidney Wilton sounded, and he was in attendance on his chief.

'It is a great secret,' said Mr. Wilton, 'but I think I ought to tell you; instead of resigning, the government have decided to dissolve.

I think it a mistake, but I stand by my friends. They believe the Irish vote will be very large, and with cheap bread will carry us through. I think the stronger we shall be in Ireland the weaker we shall be in England, and I doubt whether our cheap bread will be cheap enough. These Manchester associations have altered the aspect of affairs. I have been thinking a good deal about your position. I should like, before we broke up, to have seen you provided for by some permanent office of importance in which you might have been useful to the state, but it is difficult to manage these things suddenly. However, now we have time at any rate to look about us. Still, if I could have seen you permanently attached to this office in a responsible position, I should have been glad. I impressed upon the chief yesterday that you are most fit for it.'

'Oh! do not think of me, dear sir; you have been always too kind to me. I shall be content with my lot. All I shall regret is ceasing to serve you.'

Lady Montfort's carriage drove up to Montfort House just as Endymion reached the

door. She took his arm with eagerness ; she seemed breathless with excitement. 'I fear I am very late, but if you had gone away I should never have pardoned you. I have been kept by listening to all the new appointments from Lady Bellasyse. They quite think we are out ; you may be sure I did not deny it. I have so much to tell you. Come into my lord's room ; he is away fishing. Think of fishing at such a crisis! I cannot tell you how pleased I was with my visit to Lady Roehampton. She quite agreed with me in everything. "It must be done," she said. How very right! and I have almost done it. I will have a certain seat ; no chances. Let us have something to fall back upon. If not in office we shall be in opposition. All men must some time or other be in opposition. There you will form yourself. It is a great thing to have had some official experience. It will save you from mares' nests, and I will give parties without end, and never rest till I see you prime minister.'

So she threw herself into her husband's easy chair, tossed her parasol on the table, and

then she said, 'But what is the matter with you, Endymion? you look quite sad. You do not mean you really take our defeat—which is not certain yet—so much to heart. Believe me, opposition has its charms; indeed I sometimes think the principal reason why I have enjoyed our ministerial life so much is, that it has been from the first a perpetual struggle for existence.'

'I do not pretend to be quite indifferent to the probably impending change,' said Endymion, 'but I cannot say there is anything about it which would affect my feelings very deeply.'

'What is it then?'

'It is this business about which you and Myra are so kindly interesting yourselves,' said Endymion, with some emotion; 'I do not think I could go into parliament.'

'Not go into parliament!' exclaimed Lady Montfort. 'Why, what are men made for except to go into parliament? I am indeed astounded.'

'I do not disparage parliament,' said Endymion; 'much the reverse. It is a life that

I think would suit me, and I have often thought the day might come——'

'The day has come,' said Lady Montfort, 'and not a bit too soon. Mr. Fox went in before he was of age, and all young men of spirit should do the same. Why! you are two-and-twenty!'

'It is not my age,' said Endymion, hesitatingly; 'I am not afraid about that, for from the life which I have led of late years, I know a good deal about the House of Commons.'

'Then what is it, dear Endymion?' said Lady Montfort impatiently.

'It will make a great change in my life,' said Endymion, calmly, but with earnestness, 'and one which I do not feel justified in accepting.'

'I repeat to you, that you need give yourself no anxiety about the seat,' said Lady Montfort. 'It will not cost you a shilling. I and your sister have arranged all that. As she very wisely said, "It must be done," and it is done. All you have to do is to write an address and make plenty of speeches,

and you are M.P. for life, or as long as you like.'

'Possibly ; a parliamentary adventurer, I might swim or I might sink ; the chances are it would be the latter, for storms would arise, when those disappear who have no root in the country, and no fortune to secure them breathing time and a future.'

'Well, I did not expect, when you handed me out of my carriage to-day, that I was going to listen to a homily on prudence.'

'It is not very romantic, I own,' said Endymion, 'but my prudence is at any rate not a common-place caught up from copy-books. I am only two-and-twenty, but I have had some experience, and it has been very bitter. I have spoken to you, dearest lady, sometimes of my earlier life, for I wished you to be acquainted with it, but I observed also you always seemed to shrink from such confidence, and I ceased from touching on what I saw did not interest you.'

'Quite a mistake. It greatly interested me. I know all about you and everything. I know you were not always a clerk in a

public office, but the spoiled child of splendour. I know your father was a dear good man, but he made a mistake, and followed the Duke of Wellington instead of Mr. Canning. Had he not, he would probably be alive now, and certainly secretary of state, like Mr. Sidney Wilton. But *you* must not make a mistake, Endymion. My business in life, and your sister's too, is to prevent your making mistakes. And you are on the eve of making a very great one if you lose this golden opportunity. Do not think of the past; you dwell on it too much. Be like me, live in the present, and when you dream, dream of the future.'

'Ah! the present would be adequate, it would be fascination, if I always had such a companion as Lady Montfort,' said Endymion, shaking his head. 'What surprises me most, what indeed astounds me, is that Myra should join in this counsel—Myra, who knows all, and who has felt it perhaps deeper even than I did. But I will not obtrude these thoughts on you, best and dearest of friends. I ought not to have made to you

the allusions to my private position which I have done, but it seemed to me the only way to explain my conduct, otherwise inexplicable.'

'And to whom ought you to say these things if not to me?' said Lady Montfort, 'whom you called just now your best and dearest friend. I wish to be such to you. Perhaps I have been too eager, but, at any rate, it was eagerness for your welfare. Let us then be calm. Speak to me as you would to Myra. I cannot be your twin, but I can be your sister in feeling.'

He took her hand and gently pressed it to his lips; his eyes would have been bedewed, had not the dreadful sorrows and trials of his life much checked his native susceptibility. Then speaking in a serious tone, he said, 'I am not without ambition, dearest Lady Montfort; I have had visions which would satisfy even you; but partly from my temperament, still more perhaps from the vicissitudes of my life, I have considerable waiting powers. I think if one is patient and watches, all will come of which one is capable;

but no one can be patient who is not independent. My wants are moderate, but their fulfilment must be certain. The break-up of the government, which deprives me of my salary as a private secretary, deprives me of luxuries which I can do without—a horse, a brougham, a stall at the play, a flower in my button-hole—but my clerkship is my freehold. As long as I possess it, I can study, I can work, I can watch and comprehend all the machinery of government. I can move in society, without which a public man, whatever his talents or acquirements, is in life playing at blind man's buff. I must sacrifice this citadel of my life if I go into parliament. Do not be offended, therefore, if I say to you, as I shall say to Myra, I have made up my mind not to surrender it. It is true I have the misfortune to be a year older than Charles Fox when he entered the senate, but even with this great disadvantage I am sometimes conceited enough to believe that I shall succeed, and to back myself against the field.'

CHAPTER XXXI.

Mr. Waldershare was delighted when the great secret was out, and he found that the ministry intended to dissolve, and not resign. It was on a Monday that Lord John Russell made this announcement, and Waldershare met Endymion in the lobby of the House of Commons. 'I congratulate you, my dear boy; your fellows, at least, have pluck. If they lose, which I think they will, they will have gained at least three months of power, and irresponsible power. Why! they may do anything in the interval, and no doubt will. You will see; they will make their chargers consuls. It beats the Bed-Chamber Plot, and I always admired that. One hundred days! Why, the Second Empire lasted only one hundred days. But what days! what excitement! They were worth a hundred years at Elba.'

'Your friends do not seem quite so pleased as you are,' said Endymion.

'My friends, as you call them, are old fogies, and want to divide the spoil among the ancient hands. It will be a great thing for Peel to get rid of some of these old friends. A dissolution permits the powerful to show their power. There is Beaumaris, for example; now he will have an opportunity of letting them know who Lord Beaumaris is. I have a dream; he must be Master of the Horse. I shall never rest till I see Imogene riding in that golden coach, and breaking the line with all the honours of royalty.'

'Mr. Ferrars,' said the editor of a newspaper, seizing his watched-for opportunity as Waldershare and Endymion separated, 'do you think you could favour me this evening with Mr. Sidney Wilton's address? We have always supported Mr. Wilton's views on the corn laws, and if put clearly and powerfully before the country at this juncture, the effect might be great, perhaps even, if sustained, decisive.'

Eight-and-forty hours and more had

elapsed since the conversation between Endymion and Lady Montfort; they had not been happy days. For the first time during their acquaintance there had been constraint and embarrassment between them. Lady Montfort no longer opposed his views, but she did not approve them. She avoided the subject; she looked uninterested in all that was going on around her; talked of joining her lord and going a-fishing; felt he was right in his views of life. 'Dear Simon was always right,' and then she sighed, and then she shrugged her very pretty shoulders. Endymion, though he called on her as usual, found there was nothing to converse about; politics seemed tacitly forbidden, and when he attempted small talk Lady Montfort seemed absent—and once absolutely yawned.

What amazed Endymion still more was, that, under these rather distressing circumstances, he did not find adequate support and sympathy in his sister. Lady Roehampton did not question the propriety of his decision, but she seemed quite as unhappy and as dissatisfied as Lady Montfort.

'What you say, dearest Endymion, is quite unanswerable, and I alone perhaps can really know that; but what I feel is, I have failed in life. My dream was to secure you greatness, and now, when the first occasion arrives, it seems I am more than powerless.'

'Dearest sister! you have done so much for me.'

'Nothing,' said Lady Roehampton; 'what I have done for you would have been done by every sister in this metropolis. I dreamed of other things; I fancied, with my affection and my will, I could command events, and place you on a pinnacle. I see my folly now; others have controlled your life, not I—as was most natural; natural, but still bitter.'

'Dearest Myra!'

'It is so, Endymion. Let us deceive ourselves no longer. I ought not to have rested until you were in a position which would have made you master of your destiny.'

'But if there should be such a thing as destiny, it will not submit to the mastery of man.'

'Do not split words with me; you know

what I mean; you feel what I mean; I mean much more than I say, and you understand much more than I say. My lord told me to ask you to dine with us, if you called, but I will not ask you. There is no joy in meeting at present. I feel as I felt in our last year at Hurstley.'

'Oh! don't say that, dear Myra!' and Endymion sprang forward and kissed her very much. 'Trust me; all will come right; a little patience, and all will come right.'

'I have had patience enough in life,' said Lady Roehampton; 'years of patience, the most doleful, the most dreary, the most dark and tragical. And I bore it all, and I bore it well, because I thought of you, and had confidence in you, and confidence in your star; and because, like an idiot, I had schooled myself to believe that, if I devoted my will to you, that star would triumph.'

So, the reader will see, that our hero was not in a very serene and genial mood when he was buttonholed by the editor in the lobby, and, it is feared, he was unusually curt with that gentleman, which editors do not like, and sometimes reward with a leading article in

consequence, on the character and career of our political chief, perhaps with some passing reference to jacks-in-office, and the superficial impertinence of private secretaries. These wise and amiable speculators on public affairs should, however, sometimes charitably remember that even ministers have their chagrins, and that the trained temper and imperturbable presence of mind of their aides-de-camp are not absolutely proof to all the infirmities of human nature.

Endymion had returned home from the lobby, depressed and dispirited. The last incident of our life shapes and colours our feelings. Ever since he had settled in London, his life might be said to have been happy, gradually and greatly prosperous. The devotion of his sister and the eminent position she had achieved, the friendship of Lady Montfort, and the kindness of society, who had received him with open arms, his easy circumstances after painful narrowness of means, his honourable and interesting position—these had been the chief among many other causes which had justly rendered Endymion Ferrars a satisfied

and contented man. And it was more than to be hoped that not one of these sources would be wanting in his future. And yet he felt dejected, even to unhappiness. Myra figured to his painful consciousness only as deeply wounded in her feelings, and he somehow the cause; Lady Montfort, from whom he had never received anything but smiles and inspiring kindness, and witty raillery, and affectionate solicitude for his welfare, offended and estranged. And as for society, perhaps it would make a great difference in his position if he were no longer a private secretary to a cabinet minister and only a simple clerk; he could not, even at this melancholy moment, dewll on his impending loss of income, though that increase at the time had occasioned him, and those who loved him, so much satisfaction. And yet was he in fault? Had his decision been a narrow-minded and craven one? He could not bring himself to believe so—his conscience assured him that he had acted rightly. After all that he had experienced, he was prepared to welcome an obscure, but could not endure a humiliating, position.

It was a long summer evening. The house had not sat after the announcement of the ministers. The twilight lingered with a charm almost as irresistible as among woods and waters. Endymion had been engaged to dine out, but had excused himself. Had it not been for the Montfort misunderstanding, he would have gone; but that haunted him. He had not called on her that day; he really had not courage to meet her. He was beginning to think that he might never see her again; never, certainly, on the same terms. She had the reputation of being capricious, though she had been constant in her kindness to him. Never see her again, or only see her changed! He was not aware of the fulness of his misery before; he was not aware, until this moment, that unless he saw her every day life would be intolerable.

He sat down at his table, covered with notes in every female handwriting except the right one, and with cards of invitation to banquets and balls and concerts, and 'very earlies,' and carpet dances—for our friend was a very fashionable young man—but what is

the use of even being fashionable, if the person you love cares for you no more? And so out of very wantonness, instead of opening notes sealed or stamped with every form of coronet, he took up a business-like epistle, closed only with a wafer, and saying in drollery, 'I should think a dun,' he took out a scrip receipt for 20,000*l.* Consols, purchased that morning in the name of Endymion Ferrars, Esq. It was enclosed in half a sheet of note-paper, on which were written these words, in a handwriting which gave no clue of acquaintanceship, or even sex: 'Mind—you are to send me your first frank.'

CHAPTER XXXII.

It was useless to ask who could it be? It could only be one person; and yet how could it have been managed? So completely and so promptly! Her lord, too, away; the only being, it would seem, who could have effected for her such a purpose, and he the last individual to whom, perhaps, she would have applied. Was it a dream? The long twilight was dying away, and it dies away in the Albany a little sooner than it does in Park Lane; and so he lit the candles on his mantel-piece, and then again unfolded the document carefully, and read it and re-read it. It was not a dream. He held in his hand firmly, and read with his eyes clearly, the evidence that he was the uncontrolled master of no slight amount of capital, and which, if treated with prudence, secured to him for life an absolute and be-

coming independence. His heart beat and his cheek glowed.

What a woman! And how true were Myra's last words at Hurstley, that women would be his best friends in life! He ceased to think; and, dropping into his chair, fell into a reverie, in which the past and the future seemed to blend, with some mingling of a vague and almost ecstatic present. It was a dream of fair women, and even fairer thoughts, domestic tenderness and romantic love, mixed up with strange vicissitudes of lofty and fiery action, and passionate passages of eloquence and power. The clock struck and roused him from his musing. He fell from the clouds. Could he accept this boon? Was his doing so consistent with that principle of independence on which he had resolved to build up his life? The boon thus conferred might be recalled and returned; not legally indeed, but by a stronger influence than any law—the consciousness on his part that the feeling of interest in his life which had prompted it might change—would, must change. It was the romantic impulse of a young and fascinating woman, who had been

to him invariably kind, but who had a reputation for caprice, which was not unknown to him. It was a wild and beautiful adventure; but only that.

He walked up and down his rooms for a long time, sometimes thinking, sometimes merely musing; sometimes in a pleased but gently agitated state of almost unconsciousness. At last he sate down at his writing-table, and wrote for some time; and then directing the letter to the Countess of Montfort, he resolved to change the current of his thoughts, and went to a club.

Morning is not romantic. Romance is the twilight spell; but morn is bright and joyous, prompt with action, and full of sanguine hope. Life has few difficulties in the morning, at least, none which we cannot conquer; and a private secretary to a minister, young and prosperous, at his first meal, surrounded by dry toast, all the newspapers, and files of correspondence, asking and promising everything, feels with pride and delight the sense of powerful and responsible existence. Endymion had glanced at all the leading articles, had sorted

in the correspondence the grain from the chaff, and had settled in his mind those who must be answered and those who must be seen. The strange incident of last night was of course not forgotten, but removed, as it were, from his consciousness in the bustle and pressure of active life, when his servant brought him a letter in a handwriting he knew right well. He would not open it till he was alone, and then it was with a beating heart and a burning cheek.

LADY MONTFORT'S LETTER.

'What is it all about? and what does it all mean? I should have thought some great calamity had occurred if, however distressing, it did not appear in some sense to be gratifying. What is gratifying? You deal in conundrums, which I never could find out. Of course I shall be at home to you at any time, if you wish to see me. Pray come on at once, as I detest mysteries. I went to the play last night with your sister. We both of us rather expected to see you, but it seems neither of us had mentioned to you we were going. I did

not, for I was too low-spirited about your affairs. You lost nothing. The piece was stupid beyond expression. We laughed heartily, at least I did, to show we were not afraid. My lord came home last night, suddenly. Odo is going to stand for the county, and his borough is vacant. What an opportunity it would have been for you! a certain seat. But I care for no boroughs now. My lord will want you to dine with him to-day; I hope you can come. Perhaps he will not be able to see you this morning, as his agent will be with him about these elections. Adieu!'

If Lady Montfort did not like conundrums, she had succeeded, however, in sending one sufficiently perplexing to Endymion. Could it be possible that the writer of this letter was the unknown benefactress of the preceding eve? Lady Montfort was not a mystifier. Her nature was singularly frank and fearless, and when Endymion told her everything that had occurred, and gave her the document which originally he had meant to bring with

him in order to return it, her amazement and her joy were equal.

'I wish I had sent it,' said Lady Montfort, 'but that was impossible. I do not care who did send it; I have no female curiosity except about matters which, by knowledge, I may influence. This is finished. You are free. You cannot hesitate as to your course. I never could speak to you again if you did hesitate. Stop here, and I will go to my lord. This is a great day. If we can settle only to-day that you shall be the candidate for our borough, I really shall not much care for the change of ministry.'

Lady Montfort was a long time away. Endymion would have liked to have gone forth on his affairs, but she had impressed upon him so earnestly to wait for her return that he felt he could not retire. The room was one to which he was not unaccustomed, otherwise, its contents would not have been uninteresting; her portrait by more than one great master, a miniature of her husband in a Venetian dress upon her writing table—a table which wonderfully indicated alike the

lady of fashion and the lady of business, for there seemed to be no form in which paper could be folded and emblazoned which was there wanting ; quires of letter paper, and note paper, and notelet paper, from despatches of state to billet-doux, all were ready ; great covers with arms and supporters, more moderate ones with 'Berengaria' in letters of glittering fancy, and the destined shells of diminutive effusions marked only with a golden bee. There was another table covered with trinkets and precious toys : snuff-boxes and patch-boxes beautifully painted, exquisite miniatures, rare fans, cups of agate, birds glittering with gems almost as radiant as the tropic plumage they imitated, wild animals cut out of ivory, or formed of fantastic pearls—all the spoils of queens and royal mistresses.

Upon the walls were drawings of her various homes ; that of her childhood, as well as of the hearths she ruled and loved. There were a few portraits on the walls also of those whom she ranked as her particular friends. Lord Roehampton was one, another was the Count of Ferroll.

Time went on; on a little table, by the side of evidently her favourite chair, was a book she had been reading. It was a German tale of fame, and Endymion, dropping into her seat, became interested in a volume which hitherto he had never seen, but of which he had heard much.

Perhaps he had been reading for some time; there was a sound, he started and looked up, and then springing from his chair, he said, 'Something has happened!'

Lady Montfort was quite pale and the expression of her countenance distressed, but when he said these words she tried to smile, and said 'No, no, nothing, nothing,—at least nothing to distress you. My lord hopes you will be able to dine with him to-day, and tell him all the news.' And then she threw herself into a chair and sighed. 'I should like to have a good cry, as the servants say—but I never could cry. I will tell you all about it in a moment. You were very good not to go.'

It seems that Lady Montfort saw her lord before the agent, who was waiting, had had his interview, and the opportunity being in

every way favourable, she felt the way about obtaining his cousin's seat for Endymion. Lord Montfort quite embraced the proposal. It had never occurred to him. He had no idea that Ferrars contemplated parliament. It was a capital idea. He could not bear reading the parliament reports, and yet he liked to know a little of what was going on. Now, when anything happened of interest, he should have it all from the fountain-head. 'And you must tell him, Berengaria,' he continued, 'that he can come and dine here whenever he likes, in boots. It is a settled thing that M.P.'s may dine in boots. I think it a most capital plan. Besides, I know it will please you. You will have your own member.'

Then he rang the bell, and begged Lady Montfort to remain and see the agent. Nothing like the present time for business. They would make all the arrangements at once, and he would ask the agent to dine with them today, and so meet Mr. Ferrars.

So the agent entered, and it was all explained to him, calmly and clearly, briefly

by my lord, but with fervent amplification by his charming wife. The agent several times attempted to make a remark, but for some time he was unsuccessful; Lady Montfort was so anxious that he should know all about Mr. Ferrars, the most rising young man of the day, the son of the late Right Honourable William Pitt Ferrars, who, had he not died, would probably have been prime minister, and so on.

'Mr. Ferrars seems to be everything we could wish,' said the agent, 'and as you say, my lady, though he is young, so was Mr. Pitt, and I have little doubt, after what you say, my lady, that it is very likely he will in time become as eminent. But what I came up to town particularly to impress upon my lord is, that if Mr. Odo will not stand again, we are in a very great difficulty.'

'Difficulty about what?' said Lady Montfort impatiently.

'Well, my lady, if Mr. Odo stands, there is great respect for him. The other side would not disturb him. He has been member for some years, and my lord has been very

liberal. But the truth is, if Mr. Odo does not stand, we cannot command the seat.'

'Not command the seat! Then our interest must have been terribly neglected.'

'I hope not, my lady,' said the agent. 'The fact is, the property is against us.'

'I thought it was all my lord's.'

'No, my lady; the strong interest in the borough is my Lord Beaumaris. It used to be about equal, but all the new buildings are in Lord Beaumaris' part of the borough. It would not have signified if things had remained as in the old days. The grandfather of the present lord was a Whig, and always supported the Montforts, but that's all changed. The present earl has gone over to the other side, and I hear is very strong in his views.'

Lady Montfort had to communicate all this to Endymion. 'You will meet the agent at dinner, but he did not give me a ray of hope. Go now; indeed, I have kept you too long. I am so stricken that I can scarcely command my senses. Only think of our borough being stolen from us by Lord Beau-

maris! I have brought you no luck, Endymion; I have done you nothing but mischief; I am miserable. If you had attached yourself to Lady Beaumaris, you might have been a member of parliament.'

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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ERRATUM.

Page 285, line 9, *for* One of the most insignificant, *read* Not one of the most insignificant.